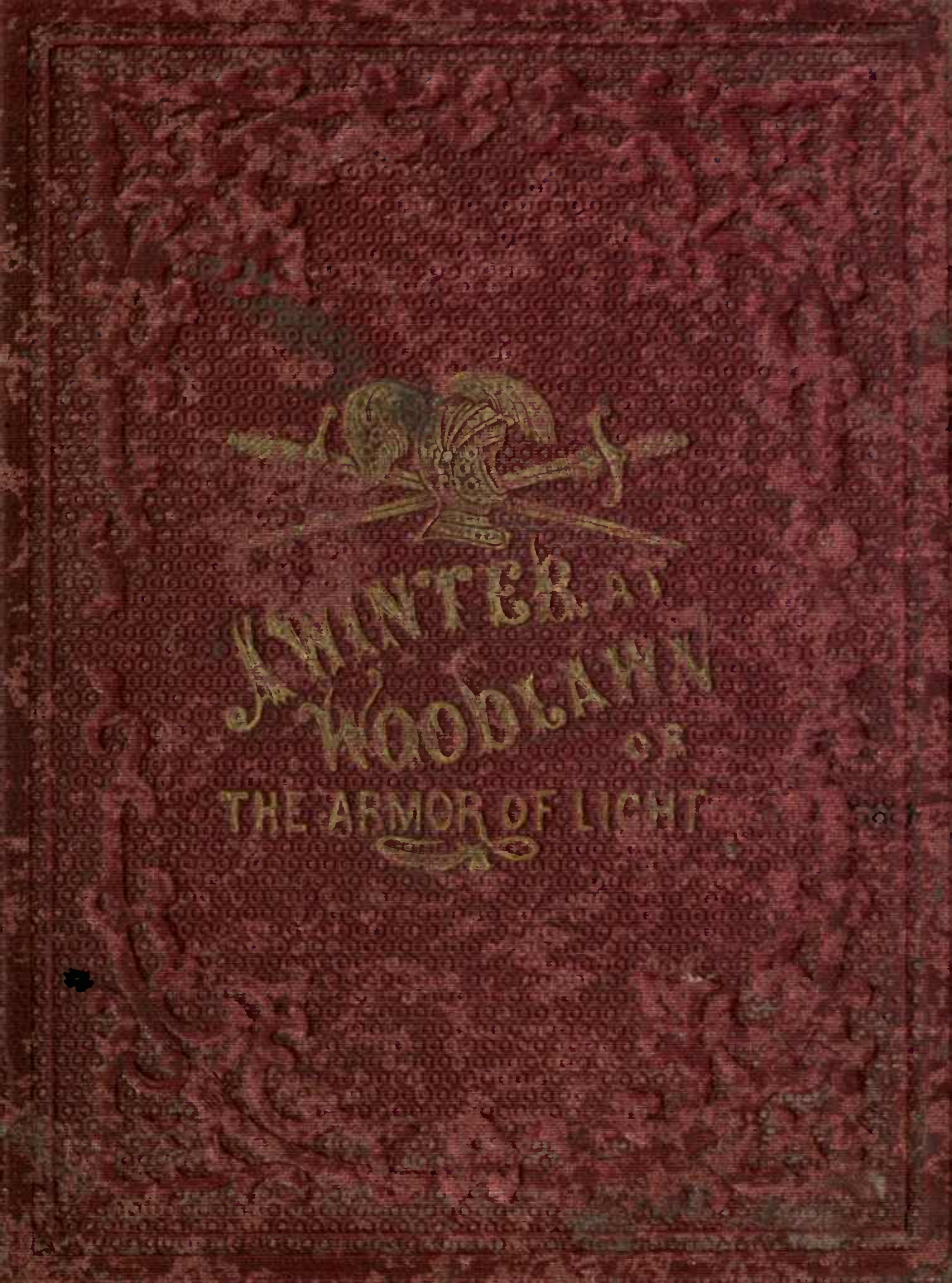
WINTERBURN
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OR
THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

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WINTER AT WOOD LAWN;

OR,

THE ARMOR OF LIGHT ILLUSTRATED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FOUR DAYS IN JULY."

'But first,' said they, 'let us go again into the armory.' So they did; and when he came there, they harnessed him from head to foot with what was of proof, lest perhaps he should meet with assaults in the way.—PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

New York:
PUBLISHED BY CARLTON & PORTER,
SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by

CARLTON & PORTER,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New-York.

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A WINTER AT WOOD LAWN.

CHAPTER I.

FROM TOWN TO COUNTRY.

Come! if you are going to-day, it is high time you were off. . . . Well, good morning all! And here we are under way.—H. W. Beecher.

IT was the Friday before Christmas, and Charles Evelyn was seated on an ottoman, in the nursery, with his cousin Nellie, looking over a book. Nellie was reading, when Charles heard his mother's voice calling him from the foot of the stairs.

"Charles," she said, "we go to Wood Lawn to-morrow, instead of Wednesday, as we expected. I

have just received a letter from Aunt Ethel, urging us to come to-day. It is too late to go to-day; but we go to-morrow."

"In that case, may I give the Christmas presents to my cousins now?" asked Charles.

"Yes, you may, if you please."

Charles ran down stairs. "I am so glad, mother," he cried. "I do not know how I could have kept the presents secret until next Tuesday."

He then opened a drawer, devoted to the little gifts he had purchased, took them out one by one, and arranged them nicely on the table, as his mother directed him to do.

"There," said he, as he completed his task; "there is a small pair of china vases for my Aunt Meta, and another pair for my dear mother; a china paper-weight for grandmamma, a bronze inkstand for my Cousin Henry, and, prettiest of all, a wax doll, with dark eyes and curly hair, for Nellie."

"Here is a Christmas present for you, Aunt Grace," cried little Walter, running in with his face smiling all over. He had looked rather downcast, thinking that he was to have no share in the general joy, when his mother gave him the package for Aunt Grace, which

at once restored his good humor. Aunt Grace kissed the little fellow as she thanked him for his present, and gave him a gun, which he at once shouldered in the most soldierly fashion.

"Me got no gun!" exclaimed the little two-year old Edward, as he put upon the chair the box of alphabetical blocks his aunt had just given him, and stood with his right foot advanced, and his hands outspread with a most injured air, as he looked at his brother marching with his gun.

Charles ran to summon the family to receive their presents. On his return, he found on the table a nice little umbrella from his Aunt Meta, a large humming-top from Nellie, and a very pretty knife, with a mother-of-pearl handle and three blades, from his Cousin Henry.

"Just the very things I wanted," shouted Charles, making a vigorous leap, and jumping joyously around the room. "Nellie, what have you got?"

"A carved Swiss cottage, just like Emily's, only a little smaller. Is it not pretty? Look at the piazza all around it; and the overhanging roof with the stones upon it, to prevent the wind blowing off the shingles. And I can look in the windows and see

the furniture in the room. Thank you, Aunt Grace, for this pretty cottage."

Dinner was now ready, but Charles begged his mother to let him stay up stairs. He was not hungry at all, he said; he could not possibly eat, if he went down to dinner. Nellie had dined with Emily; so the children were left to the full enjoyment of their gifts.

The first sound Charles heard the next morning was the rain pattering on the windows, and on the roof of the piazza.

"I am glad," he said, "for I am going to say good-by to my Cousin Emily, and I can use my umbrella. What a useful present an umbrella is!"

So, after breakfast, he took the little swing and other gifts he had bought for Emily, and, opening his umbrella with a feeling of great satisfaction, he sallied forth in the rain.

"Why, Charles," said his mother, on his return, "how did your coat get so wet? Did your new umbrella refuse to shelter you?"

"There is something wrong about the spring, mother," replied Charles, rather mortified at the result of his first expedition under an umbrella of his

own; "and as I could not open it, I had to come home under my uncle's, and it pours so, that I could not help getting wet. But look here! See what my uncle gave me! A knife with four blades, and the prettiest little porte-monnaie from Aunt Ellen, and a kaleidoscope from Emily."

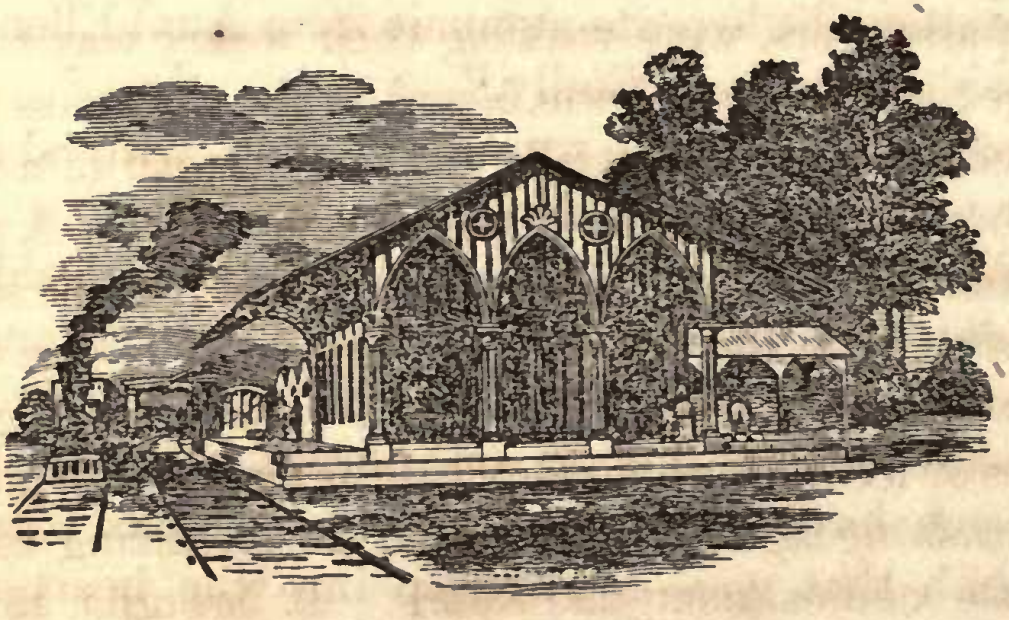
The porte-monnaie was soon filled with shining silver pieces by his grandmamma and aunts.

"We have no time to lose, Charles," said his mother; "the train leaves at twelve o'clock, and we must soon say good-by."

Good-by—that old Saxon phrase, which means, may you have a good going, a prosperous passage, the wish that goes down deep into the heart—was said; and, after a ride of two miles, Charles and his mother reached the railroad station. They were soon seated in the cars, and rushing on with great rapidity. There was not much to be seen. The heavy rain of the early morning had subsided into a fine drizzle, and the breath-stained glass completely shut out the dreary prospect. Charles put the checks for the baggage into his pocket, and arranged his mother's ticket and his own in front of his cap, so that the conductor might see them when he passed

through the cars. He felt quite manly at being so trusted.

In three hours the train reached the station. It was raining very fast when they left the cars; and



RAILROAD STATION.

while his mother went into the station-house, Charles, having succeeded in opening his umbrella, gave up his checks, and saw the baggage delivered.

"Now we must get a carriage, Charles. Aunt Ethel does not expect us to-day, so that her carriage will not be here."

But the hacks were already filled with passengers to the village; and all that could be done was to send word to Aunt Ethel that they were at the

dépôt, by Mr. Oliver's coachman, who would pass by Wood Lawn and on his way home.

The bustle attending the arrival and departure of an express train had subsided. The carriages, loaded with passengers, were making their weary way to the village; and no sound was heard in the quietness that reigned, except occasionally the heavy tread of a man entering the public room of the station-house. A poor wagoner was driving his team up the hill in the soaking rain. Charles stood for a long time at the window which looked upon the river, watching the great masses of ice drifting down with the current, grinding and crashing against each other, and whirling round in little eddies near the shore. It brought to his recollection the picture of Washington crossing the Delaware: the boat pushed on with difficulty through the huge blocks of ice that closed round it, while, regardless of the arrowy sleet driven by the keen wind in his face, Washington, with an eye that seemed to pierce through the blinding atmosphere, and the untried future, stood in his stately beauty.

But Charles had looked long enough at that troubled current; and, leaving the window, he came and sat beside his mother.

"Will we have to wait long, mother?"

"Yes, my dear. You know the roads are very muddy. It is three miles from here to Wood Lawn; and Thomas will have to get the horses after he receives the message, so that it will certainly be an hour before he comes."

Three young women now came in, and seated themselves by the stove; they were waiting for the sister of one of them, whom they expected from the other side of the river in a ferry-boat. Charles told them that he had seen the boat go over some time before, and he went to the window to watch for her coming. There was no boat to be seen; and the ice had drifted down and closed up the track she had left in the waters. The next half hour passed very slowly. It grew dark; and a man came in, put coal in the stove, and lighted a lamp high up on the wall.

"How different that light is from the gas. Is the hour passed now?" asked Charles.

"Yes, dear, and ten minutes more."

"Do you think we shall have to stay here all night?"

Mrs. Evelyn rose, and went to the little window that opened into the ticket-office, and asked Mr. Ray

at what time the hacks from the village came down again.

"At half past six o'clock, ma'am."

"Now, Charles, I can answer your question. If Aunt Ethel's carriage does not come, we shall only have to stay here an hour and a half more, and then we can go home in the hack. It will take us round by the village, however, two miles longer, through muddy roads; not a very pleasant prospect to two dinnerless travelers. But you must not be discouraged, for it is yet scarcely time to look for Thomas."

Mrs. Evelyn now stood long at the window, looking out into the deepening twilight. At length she saw Thomas drive up to the door. In two minutes their luggage was on the carriage, and they were on the way to Wood Lawn. It was dark, and raining steadily; but they were sheltered, and on their way to friends. Aunt Ethel met them in the hall with her bright face of welcome.

"I sent to the dépôt for you yesterday, and I did not expect to see you to-day in this storm," she said.

"I did not receive your letter," answered Mrs. Evelyn, "until yesterday afternoon, when it was too late to come. How is Mr. Herbert?"

"Out of danger, but he is still very weak. He has been extremely ill; and I have spent days of great anxiety here by myself."

Mr. Herbert was on the sofa when they entered the parlor. Mrs. Evelyn, unwilling to lessen Charles's pleasure in exchanging Christmas gifts, had not told him of the severe illness of his friend; and the little boy shrunk back with a sort of awe, when, instead of warm words of welcome, Mr. Herbert merely put his hand on his head and stroked his hair. The child was sobered at once. He moved quietly, and spoke in low tones all the evening. Mr. Herbert, who was the pastor of a Church in the neighborhood, made one of the family at Wood Lawn. He had had a severe attack of illness, from which he was slowly recovering.

"We have the prospect of a stormy Sunday," said Mrs. Evelyn, as they paused on their way up stairs to listen to the voice of the storm. Her thoughts took a somber hue, as far into the night the rain fell steadily, and the wind moaned about the house.

"Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." How brightly the sun lighted up the earth! How the landscape seemed all aglow

with its cheering beams! How soft and balmy was the air, when, after breakfast, Charles and his mother walked round the despoiled garden, and sat in the rustic seat beneath the over-arching trellis-work. A Sabbath stillness rested on everything. The ice had drifted out of sight, and the waters of the river were calm and tranquil as in the summer time. But for the absence of verdure, and the leafless trees with their naked branches, one might have imagined it May rather than December.

After an early dinner, Charles and his mother rode to the Rosenberg Church in time for Sunday school; and there was a joyful meeting with the children. There had been a succession of stormy Sundays, and this bright day seemed like a gift from Heaven.

Mrs. Evelyn paused in the porch, after the service, to look at the wide-spread landscape—the mountains in their grandeur, and the glassy river reflecting the amber tints of a radiant sunset. How pleasant was the ride home, as with their faces to the west they looked on the fading glories of the evening sky; while far to the north, on the eastern horizon, rose the moon round as a shield.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell on Christmas eve.—TENNYSON.

Heap on more wood, the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.

Domestic and religious rite
Gave honor to the holy night.—SCOTT.

CHRISTMAS morning came; but no bright sun shone in upon the breakfast table. Snow and sleet were falling, and reluctantly Mrs. Evelyn came to the conclusion that there was no going to church.

"This is but the second Christmas day I ever remember staying from Church," said she, as her thoughts

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

wandered back to many festive and joyous seasons in days gone by.

The day passed very quietly, reading books in harmony with the subjects so dear to the Christian's heart, which Christmas suggests, singing sweet hymns, and in pleasant converse. The shades of evening came on, and the large wood fire in the drawing-room sent out a ruddy glow. Then the Christmas tree was lighted. The family were all assembled: Mr. Herbert in a large chair drawn up on one side of the fire, while Aunt Ethel sat on the other side.

"Grace, you shall be our Lady Bountiful," said Aunt Ethel.

"Allow me to resign in favor of Bessie," replied Mrs. Evelyn; "she is taller than I, and can more readily reach the gifts from the higher branches."

It was a quiet family party, and it needed the life and action with which Charles's nature overflowed. Every gift was accompanied by some signs of pleasure, as he coursed rapidly around the room, commenting on each present as it was drawn forth from its covering of tissue paper.

"Let me see, Mr. Herbert," said the sprightly lad,

"you have a pair of fur gloves: how warm they will keep your hands this winter; an interleaved Bible, and a bronze inkstand. How do you like the inkstand? It is my present."

"I think, Charles, it is very useful, and very pretty," Mr. Herbert replied.

"And, Aunt Ethel, you have a velvet toilet-cushion, and a candle-screen, and a spy-glass. What a pretty little spy-glass that is! And now for mother's. What a beautiful book! 'Sabbath Bells Chimed by the Poets.' What pretty pictures of churches, and peaceful Sunday scenes."

Charles was silent for a few moments as he looked at a large oil print which his mother held in her hand. It was the "Descent from the Cross;" and it had taken her thoughts far away to the magnificent cathedral in Antwerp, where she had seen the wonderful picture of Rubens, from which the oil print was taken. Two men who had mounted by ladders leaned over the transverse beam of the cross, and supported the body from above, while below it was received by the outstretched arms of five persons—Joseph of Arimathea, the three Marys, and John, the beloved disciple, who looked upon the dead Christ

with the deepest sorrow and love. They knew him not yet, as their risen Lord. They were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken, and all that the Saviour had said, touching his rising from the dead. Was there faith then upon the earth, in that dark hour when the blessed Messenger from heaven, who had come to teach men wisdom, had died even as other men die?

"Now mother, you have looked long enough at that picture; I want you all to look at my presents," interposed Charles. "Here is a child's library of six books, translated from the German. O, thank you, Aunt Ethel. How prettily they are bound! And this is from Mr. Herbert, an oil print of a boy and dog. The dog looks just like Watch. Poor Watch! how he used to plunge in the water and swim last summer! but he strayed away in town, and we could not find him. Poor Watch! what a good dog he was!

"And now for mother's present to me: a suit of armor—helmet, breastplate, gauntlets; a shield, sword, battle-axes, and daggers; all made of bronze, and fastened on this blue velvet shield, I was going to say. I do not know what to call it. It is somewhat

POOR WATCH.

in the form of a heart; and the armor is tastefully disposed upon it."

"Why do you think your mother chose that armor for you, Charles?" asked Aunt Ethel.

"Not for the same reason that a Spartan mother used to present a suit of armor as a choice gift to her son. Mother would not like me to be a soldier; but she knows how much I like to read about brave soldiers, battles, and heroes.

"I think," rejoined Aunt Ethel, "she would like you to be a soldier."

"O yes, a soldier of the cross," replied Charles.

"Yes, dear, we are all called to that warfare; and we need armor of celestial temper to enable us to meet our enemies. Do you know who our enemies are?"

"You must learn that verse in the last chapter of Ephesians, Charles," said his mother, "and you can well answer your aunt's question. 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'"

"O, mother!" said Charles, with great gravity, "don't you remember that fearful verse I was learning one day?

"'Angels our march oppose,
Who still in strength excel;
Our secret, sworn, eternal foes,
Countless, invisible.

"'But shall believers fear?
But shall believers fly?
Or see the bloody cross appear,
And all their powers defy?'"

"Tea is ready," said Bridget, her face beaming with smiles, while she still held in her hand the presents she had received from the Christmas-tree.

"Bridget," said Aunt Ethel, "you and Bessie blow out the lights on the Christmas-tree. It has brought us all pretty gifts and pleasant thoughts, though the youngest eyes have seen the brightest things in its green branches."

CHAPTER III.

SPLENDORS OF A DAY IN WINTER.

> Thou hast thy decorations too, although
> Thou art austere: thy studded mantle gay
> With icy brilliants, which as proudly glow
> As erst Golconda's.—BERNARD BARTON.

THE morning came serene and glorious. The rising sun kindled unwonted splendor in the landscape. The storm of the night had covered every branch and spray with a thick coating of ice; and everything was glorified as the level rays of the morning sun shone upon it. Diamonds and precious stones sparkled in the branches of the venerable locusts, whose old trunks looked all unconscious of the grand display above them. The withered plants of the garden shone out in new brilliancy; the border of box looked fresh and

WINTER SCENERY.

green under its crystal covering; the long, red branches of the rose-bushes, and the scarlet berries of the burning bush, blushed brightly in their icy sheath; the weeping willow-tree, with its pendant branches, looked like a fountain of silver as it swayed to and fro in the breeze; and the lawn, so bare and dreary but a few days before, was now all glittering with little lances of quivering light.

"It is as if winter had given all things a new dress, to protect them from its icy breath," said Charles.

"Winter has lighted up a Christmas-tree," added Mr. Herbert, "much more bright and beautiful than ours of last evening."

"Do look," said Mrs. Evelyn, "at that noble elm-tree at the foot of the lawn, with its stately trunk and its interlacing boughs! What a delicate silver net-work is formed by those closely intermingling branches."

"If but a part of this wide-spread scene of wondrous magnificence could be inclosed," remarked Aunt Ethel, "and the citizens of our great metropolis invited to look at it, how readily would thousands pay an admission fee for a vision

of such fairy-like beauty; and yet such glorious pictures are painted for men who neither wonder nor admire, because the artist is Divine. 'He casteth forth his ice like morsels.'"

"You did not like the storm yesterday, Charles," said his mother; "but without it we should have had no such joyous scene as this to-day."

"I should be glad," exclaimed Charles, "to have every third day stormy, to make ready such a splendid sight. Does it not look as if the earth had put on her armor of light?"

"We often wait," replied his mother, "till the storm thickens and darkens around us before we put on our armor of light. The armor is buckled on in the dark hours, when the stars are hidden, and the moon has withdrawn her shining, when the tempest breaks upon us in its fearful power; but the Voice says, 'Peace, be still,' and there is a great calm; the clouds break away, the Sun of Righteousness arises, and in its blessed beams the celestial armor shines. The works of darkness cast away, the armor of light put on, the Christian goes on his way rejoicing, for his panoply is of God."

After dinner Charles and his mother rode to

Brookside, their pleasant summer home. The cottage was shut up for the winter, as the family had removed to town. It was a lovely afternoon; the air was cold and clear; the road was covered with ice, so that the sleigh glided smoothly along. Everything was beautiful. Every stubble field

FARM-HOUSE.

glowed and sparkled with its brilliant points of light: the rail-fence looked like crystal bars, and an old house that had never known the virtues of paint, shone out with its treasures of ice, delicately defining every brown plank, and ornamenting the

roof with a cornice of silver. Did Mr. Van Tromp observe the transformation that his house had undergone? Had he eyes to see the glory spread over his fields and all his familiar places? Or did he go forth to his work without a glance at the mysteries of beauty about his daily paths? "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

The gate to Brookside had long been shut; and it was so fastened by the ice, that it was with some difficulty Thomas opened it. How quiet it looked as they drove down the carriage road: the cottage, with its white shutters all closed; the verandah, on which so many tiny feet pattered the long summer days, now deserted; and the lawn and walks covered with ice.

"I am so glad I brought my sled, mother; here is a fine hill to slide down!" exclaimed Charles.

"Well, come with me first to the waterfall; and then you may amuse yourself a little while with your sled," replied his mother.

They walked on the icy path through the woods, where in summer the shade was so deep. The old pine-tree stretched wide his great arms, as if he were

now free from the intruding branches of the oak and hickory, that in summer perplexed him with their foliage. The path ran beside a brook, which, swollen and impetuous, foamed and rushed onward.

"O mother!" exclaimed Charles, "how beautiful the falls look!"

Dashing down a succession of ledges, until divided in two by a group of trees, they made a leap over a perpendicular mass of rock. The surface of the rock was covered with ice in all sorts of fantastic forms—huge columns of alabaster, large pieces of white coral, while long icicles hung from every projecting point. Most of the trees on the hill from the heights of which the stream made its noisy way to the valley below, were hemlocks, the deep green of which took all dreariness from the picture, and gave a summer softness to its winter grandeur.

"O mother," cried Charles, "they are much more beautiful now than in summer. Do you see that great tree that used to lean across the falls, and which fell last summer? You know it then made a bridge across the stream, and now the water is so high that I can scarcely see it. Do you remember how Watch used to swim after the sticks I threw in this

basin, come out with them in his mouth, and then give himself such a shake when he got on the stones, that it was almost like giving me a shower bath? Poor Watchy! I never shall see him again. How sorry I am that he is lost! He used to look up so lovingly in my face, and put up his paw to shake hands with me; and then he would run and look for a stone, and sit by me for half an hour, with the stone in his mouth, with such a satisfied look, as if he were doing something that he thought would please me very much. Poor Watch, how glad I should be to see him again!"

"And I should rejoice as much as you," replied his mother, "to see him, with his beautiful head and graceful form, bounding along the path as he used to do. But it is time for us to be going now;" and, with many a lingering look at the old familiar rocks, and walks, and woods, they left Brookside.

After tea Bridget came in with an air that told of some important intelligence. "Thomas's wife's brother is dead. You know, ma'am," said she, addressing Aunt Ethel, "that he was a soldier in the Crimea, and that he was wounded; and now word has come that he is dead."

"It brings the war near to us," said Aunt Ethel, "for its desolations to reach our own households."

"What a terrible thing war is," said Mrs. Evelyn. "The deformity and horror of it seem to have been more manifest than ever in the war of the Crimea. Stripped of the illusions generally thrown over it, it has been pictured before us in all its minute details of misery."

"And yet," said Charles, musingly, as he stood looking into the fire, "a great many noble characters have been formed by war."

"When?" asked his mother.

"Why, in our struggle for liberty. How brave and heroic our soldiers were! Just think of Washington," said Charles.

"Well, he was first in *peace* as well as in war. Do you think he loved war?"

"O, no! he only engaged in it to secure our independence."

"And with it the blessings of peace. And then how serenely he governed the nation; and how gladly he retired at last to the quiet of his country home at Mount Vernon!"

"But, mother, just think of that Roman who, with

THE BATTLE FIELD.

two others, defended a bridge against an advancing army; and when his two companions fell gallantly fighting by his side, and he was left alone to stay the tide of enemies, he bade those in the rear cut down the bridge behind him. When he heard the timbers crash and fall, he leaped into the stream, and swam to the shore. Was not he brave?"

"Yes, Charles, he was; but I can tell you of a little boy who was as great a hero as your Roman soldier. He lived at Haarlem, in Holland, where, you know, solid dikes are built to keep out the sea. These dikes are watched with the greatest care; for if the sea makes its way through the least crevice, it gradually widens the breach until it sweeps away the dikes, and overflows the whole country. The little boy of whom I speak had been sent on an errand. On his return home, he was gathering flowers, when he found he could not distinguish their color. He looked up; the sun had set, and the evening shades were beginning to gather around him. He quickened his pace, for he was at some distance from his home, and wished to reach it before nightfall. Suddenly he heard a sound like the

trickling of water. He stopped and listened; there was no mistaking the sound. His path lay near the dike; and as he looked carefully at the place whence the sound seemed to come, he saw a little opening in the sea-wall, through which the salt water was dripping. In a moment—for children in Holland know the danger of a breach in their walls of defense—he thrust his finger into the opening, and stayed the water. And there the child stood through the long, long hours of night, his finger becoming numb, and his arm stiff with the cold; but still he stood firm at the post of duty. He thought of his home, and the dear faces there; of the alarm his absence would occasion, of his warm, comfortable bed; but he dared not withdraw that slender finger, which was the defense of the whole land. Before he could give the alarm, the rushing waters would have gained too great a power to be repelled by thousands of banded men; and yet his tiny finger stayed the advancing tide all the night! Would the morning never come? Could the numb finger and the cold, stiff arm bear much longer the agony of pain?

The first gray tints of dawn at last appeared in the east; the sound of footsteps was heard; his father

and friends at length found the object of their search. The child, faint with hunger and cold, the little hero, worn with the long conflict, was relieved at his post; and strong arms and hands repaired the breach which he had discovered and defended. Was he not well named the little hero of Haarlem? and was it not harder for him to maintain his post, and stay those threatening waves, amid the darkness and stillness of that long night, when there was no voice to cheer, and no eye to look upon him, than it was for the soldier on the bridge to repel the advancing tide of his enemies, amid the encouraging shouts of hosts of his fellow-soldiers?"

"Well, I suppose it was, mother," replied Charles; "he was a brave little hero, and he saved his country from desolation. How happy he must have been all his life when he looked back on that long night of suffering! But I remember another instance of heroism, though it was for a baser purpose than that of the man who fought on the bridge. It was Mutius Scevola, I believe, who penetrated to the tent of Porsenna, King of Etruria, with the intention of killing him, but stabbed the secretary, mistaking him for the king. On being brought into the royal presence,

and asked by the king why he came, he replied, 'To kill you.'

"'Know you not,' said the king, 'that your life is in my power?'

"'Yes,' was his bold answer; 'and I can die!' Then

SCEVOLA'S HEROISM.

thrusting his hand into the flame that was burning on an altar near him, he held it there until it was consumed. The king, in admiration of his fortitude, pardoned him."

"Well, my dear," said Aunt Ethel, "I have read of a man of peace, who showed as great a power of endurance, while he was stimulated by a nobler motive."

"Who was that, Aunt Ethel?" asked Charles.

"It was John Maynard, the helmsman of Lake Erie. The steamboat was on fire; and the captain saw that the only chance of saving the lives of the passengers was by putting on all the steam, that they might reach the shore. The bows, upon which groups of terrified people were clustered, were turned toward land. The captain called out to John Maynard to know if he could hold on to the helm. 'I'll try, sir,' said he. The flames rose in a thick volume, and separated the helmsman from all on board; the smoke blinded his eyes, the hot breath of the devouring element almost stifled him, and the tongues of fire leaped toward him; but he moved not from his post. The flames curled round the wheel, and shriveled and consumed the hand that held it; but he stretched out his other hand to the helm, and the steamboat held on its way to the shore. It was reached; men, women, and children leaped unharmed upon the beach. But where was he who, in

that fearful hour, had stood so manfully at his post, and saved them all from a watery grave? They found him at the helm. Death had taken him from the wheel in a chariot of flame, I trust with a prayer on his lips, and a reliance on the mercy of his Saviour."

"That was noble," said Charles; "he gave his life to save others."

"The contrast," remarked Mr. Herbert, "between the courage of the soldier of this world's battles and the fearless spirit of the soldier of Christ, is very strikingly exhibited in an incident in Mr. Fletcher's life. A nephew of his, formerly an officer in the Sardinian army, from which service he had been compelled to retire, had given himself up to vice and extravagance. In great want of money, he called on his uncle, General De Gons, and presenting a loaded pistol, demanded a draft for five hundred crowns. The general, though a brave man, seeing that he was in the power of a desperate man, gave him the draft; and with it the required promise that he would not seek to recover the draft, or bring him to justice. In the evening the young man, elated by the success of his daring attempt, called on Mr. Fletcher; and,

speaking of the kindness of his Uncle De Gons, showed the draft as a proof of it.

"Mr. Fletcher looked at it; and, folding it up, put it into his pocket, telling his nephew that he considered it his duty to retain it until he had seen his brother, who, he was sure, had not willingly bestowed upon him so large a sum. The pistol was at once at his breast; and he was told, as he valued his life, to return the draft.

"'My life,' was the calm reply, 'is secure in the protection of the Almighty Power who guards it; nor will he suffer it to be the forfeit of my integrity and of your rashness.'

"Astonished at his calmness, the young man remarked that his Uncle De Gons, though an old soldier, was more afraid of death than he.

"'Afraid of death!' was the noble answer; 'do you think that I have been twenty-five years a minister of the Lord of life, to be afraid of death now? No, sir, thanks be to God who giveth me the victory! It is for you to fear death, who have every reason to fear it. You are a gamester and a cheat, and yet call yourself a gentleman! You are a duelist, and your hand is red with your brother's

blood; and for that you style yourself a man of honor. Look there, sir! look there! See the broad eye of Heaven is fixed upon us! Tremble in the presence of your Maker, who can in a moment kill your body, and forever punish your soul in hell!'

"Pale and trembling, the young man stood—arguing, threatening, and entreating; standing now with his back against the door, now with a pistol pointed to his uncle's breast. Subdued at length by Mr. Fletcher's courage and coolness, he listened to his serious, kind words; and Mr. Fletcher, after praying with him, promised that he would contribute a hundred crowns, and obtain a like sum from other members of the family, toward freeing him from his embarrassments. And thus they parted."

"I was thinking," said Mrs. Evelyn to Aunt Ethel, "when you were telling us of the helmsman of Lake Erie, wrapped in fire at his post, of the Roman soldier found in the excavations at Pompeii, standing in his place, with his face toward the burning mountain, quailing not, though rivers of lava were rushing onward, and showers of ashes filling the air. He looked the danger in the face; but he forgot not the great lesson he had well learned of obedience and

fidelity. And there he stood in his armor, while empires rose and fell; and preached a sermon on faithfulness in duty, to the men of seventeen centuries afterward, as they removed the earth from around him. Thus may we, having put on the whole armor of God, stand in the evil day, and having done all, stand."

CHAPTER IV.

THE DIVINE PANOPLY.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.—Eph. vi, 13.

Behold the Christian warrior stand
In all the armor of his God;
The Spirit's sword is in his hand,
His feet are with the Gospel shod.—MONTGOMERY.

ANOTHER beautiful morning; but the "winter Christmas-tree" had lost many of its gay ornaments, and its lights shone not so brightly. The sunshine of the preceding day, and a light wind in the night, had broken off many encircling icicles. The glory was gradually departing, like other bright things of earth, too beautiful to stay.

"You did not see it by moonlight, Mr. Herbert," said Aunt Ethel.

"No," replied he; "my hours for retiring are rather too early to allow me any moonlight views."

"I was looking at it from my window," said Mrs. Evelyn, "when Aunt Ethel called me to see it from hers. At each point of view a new phase of beauty was revealed. The moon shining through the trees made of their interlacing twigs a sort of fairy bower. The old apple-trees were crowned with glory."

"How much of the night do big people sleep?" asked Charles, with an arch look. "I always hear of so much being seen and done after I go to bed."

The fleeting pageant drew them to the windows many times during the day; and though the trees were stripped of their ornaments, and the shrubbery was casting aside its jewels, yet the lawn still bristled with its thousand spears of light, as the setting sun looked athwart it with its slanting beams.

"Pleasant firelight!" exclaimed Charles, "how it lights up my armor! That is a pretty place for it on the wall, where it catches the last rays of the sun, and where the fire shines on it with such a ruddy

glow. But that armor is not of much use hanging up there."

"It is of about as much use," replied his mother, "as most of the armor in the world. I saw, in the Tower of London, a great many suits of armor, of all the different periods of history. They looked like so many knights with their gauntleted hands, their helmets on, and their visors down. But they only stand there as memorials of a past age, when the great profession was that of arms, and when knights spent years of life incased in iron and steel."

"How differently soldiers go forth to battle now," said Charles; "with no breastplate, helmet, or shield."

"What has made the change?" asked his mother.

"The invention of gunpowder changed the mode of warfare. Instead of fighting hand to hand, with spear, javelin, and sword, soldiers now fight in solid ranks, more as one man. They obey their captains better. Now, their guns are all raised to one level, and they fire at once; but formerly it seemed all confusion, each one raising his sword in a different position as he parried the attack of the enemy with his shield. And the knights used to fly about the field and engage combatants in different places."

ARMOR OF THE FEUDAL AGES.

"Would the ancient armor be of any use to soldiers now, Charles?" asked Aunt Ethel.

"I have read," replied Charles, "that the chain mail would turn a bullet, and that even plate armor would flatten it. But how could a soldier take aim with a helmet on? or how could he, burdened with his heavy armor, run and spike the guns of the enemy? The cuirassiers, however, wear a breastplate and a helmet, and they are one of the finest of the cavalry regiments. It must have been a strange sight to see the Macedonian phalanx as they moved on in marching order, in the form of a wedge, with a fringe of bristling spears; and nothing to be seen behind the locked shields but legs and helmets."

"Do soldiers ever march now in such close array?" asked Aunt Ethel, who wished to draw from Charles the knowledge he had acquired of the art of war.

"Why you know, Aunt Ethel," he replied, "that they sometimes form a solid square—the first row kneeling and presenting their bayonets, the second row half erect, and the third standing. A pretty formidable array for a cavalry corps to attack. It was such a square of the Old Guard of Napoleon, at the battle of Waterloo, that was surrounded by Blucher

and Wellington. Napoleon wished to stay with them, but the commander seized his horse's bridle and led him away. But there they stood, their ranks thinning and thinning, till Wellington said to Blucher, 'It is a pity to kill such brave men. Let us ask them to surrender.' The proposal was made, but the stern rejoinder was, 'The Old Guard dies—it never surrenders!' and the last man was killed on the field of battle."

"That is the spirit," said Mr. Herbert, "which animates the Christian warrior. He dies, but he never surrenders; never gives up his principles, never yields to his watchful enemy. Captivity to sin is terrible, but death he fears not. Death but ends his conflict, and hangs up his armor as a trophy to his valor. Death takes him where there is no more war or fighting—no more cruel enemies; but where, crowned as the successful warrior, he can look back with joy upon the battles he has fought, from the high vantage-ground of eternal repose."

"Mother," said Charles, "I wish you would look at the plates in 'Layard's Nineveh,' they are so interesting. Some of the warriors have coats of scale armor, reaching to the knees."

"I have looked at them; and I found that the slingers were dressed in a tunic of embroidered leather, or felt, which was strong enough to resist the weapons then in use, with pointed helmets, and greaves of leather or brass laced up in front."

"The pointed helmet," said Charles, "was characteristic of the Assyrian warrior, who sometimes wore a helmet with a graceful crest. Then he had an embroidered tunic with a broad girdle, a cross-belt passing over the shoulder, and ornamented on the breast with a circular disk of metal, a shield, and greaves. His arms were the spear, the bow, the sword, and the dagger."

ANCIENT HELMET.

"These offensive arms," said Mr. Herbert, "were like those of the Jews, who used swords —some of which had two edges—daggers, spears, javelins, bows, and arrows; also axes and maces, which were used as weapons of war."

"You forget, Mr. Herbert," said Charles, "the

sling and smooth stone, with which David killed Goliath."

"I ought not to forget the sling," said Mr. Herbert; "for the Jewish slingers were so expert, that seven hundred of them in one army could sling stones at a hair's breadth, and not miss. You will find the account of this in the twentieth chapter of Judges."

"And what defensive armor had the Jews?" asked Charles.

"They wore the 'pectoral' to cover the breast, the plaited girdle, the sagum, or military cloak, called the habergeon in our translation of the Pentateuch, and two kinds of shields."

"What is a pectoral, Mr. Herbert?" asked Charles.

BODY ARMOR.

"It is a part of body armor, very ancient. It originated in Egypt. It is called in our translation a coat of mail, and was probably attached to a short tunic, in the same manner that the sacred breastplate was fastened to the ephod."

"All nations who have engaged in war," said Aunt Ethel, "have felt the necessity of protecting their

bodies from the weapons of their enemies. You know the Peruvians wore a quilted cuirass, which has been known even to turn a bullet. I remember when my cousins were going to join the army in the war of 1812, I went to their sister, who was a little girl, and said, 'My dear, your brothers must wear quilted jackets; they may preserve their lives.' Mary went with all earnestness to communicate this important piece of intelligence to her brothers, but they treated it with great contempt. The idea of their wearing quilted jackets; how they would be laughed at by their fellow-officers, if they were found to be thus protected! The young Americans were not willing to take lessons from the old Peruvians; and my wise suggestion was unheeded."

"Did they return safe from the war, Aunt Ethel?" asked Charles.

"O yes, my dear; I dined with one of them the other day."

"How heavy the steel armor of feudal times must have been," said Charles. "I remember reading of an act of kindness and strength performed by William Duke of Normandy. When he landed at Hastings, he went with twenty-five of his soldiers to explore

the country. The road was so steep and rugged that one of the soldiers sunk under the weight of his armor, and was unable to reach the camp without putting it off. But William bore the armor of the soldier in addition to his own."

"We are told," remarked Mr. Herbert, "to put on the whole armor of God. This Divine armor not only defends, but it strengthens us in the day of battle. The Christian warrior, clad in this Divine panoply, feels himself animated by a new strength. Like Achilles, he

> "'Beholds himself with wondering eyes,
> His arms he poises, and his motions tries;
> Buoy'd by some inward force, he seems to swim,
> And feels a pinion lifting every limb.'"

"Yes," said Mrs. Evelyn, "the dreams of the heathen have become the realities of the Christian. The armor presented to him to shield him in the day of battle, is of Divine workmanship; and it forms a perfect protection for the entire man."

"What a fine description Homer gives of the armor of Achilles," said Mr. Herbert.

> "'O'er his breast was braced the hollow gold,
> The brazen sword a various baldric tied,

ARMED MAN.

That starr'd with gems hung glittering at his side;
And, like the moon, the broad, refulgent shield
Blazed with long rays, and gleam'd athwart the field;
Next his high head the helmet graced; behind
The sweepy crest hung floating in the wind.' "

"A more beautiful description," said Aunt Ethel, "is that of the armor of light, of which the armor of Achilles was but a faint foreshadowing. St. Paul,

ROMAN SOLDIERS.

when he wrote to the Ephesians about putting on this armor, must have thought of many a Roman soldier to whom he had preached the Gospel of Christ, and

with whose armor he, as well as the Ephesians, was perfectly familiar. Living in those ancient times, when armed men were in all their streets, they must have felt the full force of the exhortation to put on the whole armor of God; and they must have been constantly reminded in their daily walks of these spirit-stirring words."

"The great and good King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus," remarked Mrs. Evelyn, "when they brought him his equipments, the morning of his last battle, said, 'I have God's harness on.' Fighting to maintain the Reformed faith, and to deliver the Protestants of Germany from the tyranny of Austria, he daily used the sword of the Spirit, and set his army a bright example of piety and trust in God. Each regiment, called together at dawn of day, by beat of drum, chanted their morning psalm or hymn, joined in prayer, and listened to a short sermon from their chaplain."

"There are six pieces of armor mentioned by the apostle," said Mr. Herbert; "the girdle, the breastplate, the shoes, the shield, the helmet, and the sword."

"They are all pieces of defensive armor, but the sword," added Charles.

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Herbert, "we are taught by this that the great Christian duty is to be watchful; to be ever standing on our guard. We have an ever-active enemy, from whose attacks we are called upon to defend ourselves."

"How much we have learned about armor this evening," exclaimed Charles. "I think my armor has been of some use after all."

"And the conversation has been so interesting to me," said Aunt Ethel, "that I have a plan to propose. There are six pieces of armor; let us, for the next two weeks, devote three evenings a week to their consideration. We will read and think about them during the day, that we may each have something to say about them in the evening. We will take them in the order they occur in the sixth chapter of Ephesians. To-morrow we will begin with the girdle."

"That will be delightful," exclaimed Charles, springing from his chair.

"Well, Charles," said Aunt Ethel, "you have been reading about wars, and soldiers, and heroes; we will look to you for stories. They will be fresher in your mind than in ours."

CHAPTER V.

THE GIRDLE.

Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.—EPH. vi, 14.

FRIDAY evening came. Charles thought Bridget was very slow in taking away the tea things, he was so anxious to talk about the armor. When the tea things were removed, the household were called together for family prayer. The third chapter of Colossians was then read, and the following hymn sung:

"Hark how the watchmen cry!
Attend the trumpet's sound;
Stand to your arms, the foe is nigh,
The powers of hell surround.

"Who bow to Christ's command,
Your arms and hearts prepare;
The day of battle is at hand,
Go forth to glorious war."

Mr. Herbert offered up prayer to God, for strength to fight against temptation, to resist all the wiles of the wicked one—for pardon, and peace, and protection; and all felt how blessed was that household that was thus daily commended to God's holy care and keeping.

"And now for the girdle," said Charles. "I cannot say much about it, and I do not know any stories about girdles."

"But you can tell us," said Aunt Ethel, "for what girdles were used in ancient times."

"Their robes," replied Charles, "were loose and flowing; and they wore the girdle to confine them, if they wanted to engage in any occupation, or to go on a journey. With those loose robes they could not walk or work."

"The girdle," said Mr. Herbert, "was a very costly article of dress. It was often richly embroidered with gold and pearls. Eastern kings and princes set apart the revenues of certain provinces for the girdles of

THE GIRDLE.

their wives. In times of mourning, the Jews laid aside their costly girdles, and wore belts of rope or sackcloth."

"John the Baptist and Elijah wore leathern girdles," said Charles; "I suppose they were always mourning for the sins of the people, as they were always crying unto them to repent."

"Sometimes," said Mrs. Evelyn, "the girdles were

large and hollow, like the skin of a serpent; and they were then used as purses."

"Yes, mother," said Charles, "a man was discovered in the excavations of Pompeii, smothered by the burning ashes of Vesuvius as he was trying to escape, and his girdle was filled with pieces of money."

"The high priest's girdle," remarked Mr. Herbert, "was of fine twined linen, embroidered with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet. It went twice about the body, and was fastened before, the ends hanging down to the feet."

"Our Saviour," said Aunt Ethel, "when, in the vision of the Apocalypse, he manifested himself with that blinding glory which caused the beloved disciple, who, seventy years before, had leaned confidingly on his bosom, to sink at his feet as dead, appeared as our great High Priest, passed into the heavens, clothed with a garment down to his feet, and girt with a *golden girdle*, marks of his priestly as well as his kingly power; not girt as one that goeth on a journey, but girt about the breast as an emblem of solemn rest."

"We have not yet spoken of the military girdle to which the apostle refers," observed Mr. Herbert.

THE MILITARY GIRDLE.

"It was valuable, and bestowed as a reward. We may gather this from Joab's reply to the man who told him that he saw Absalom hanged in an oak, when he said, 'Why didst thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver and a *girdle*.'"

"Another instance of its value," said Mrs. Evelyn, "is that it was the parting present from the son of a king to the friend of his heart. Jonathan gave to David his robe, and his bow, and his *girdle;* gifts to be worn on his person, as grateful mementoes to the dwellers in caves and rocks of the noble princely youth, who recognized in him the future monarch of Israel."

"And we, too," said Aunt Ethel, "have a friend whose love to us is wonderful, and he is ready to make a covenant with us, and give unto us a robe of righteousness and a *girdle of truth;* and he looks upon us in our low estate as kings for whom he has radiant crowns, as heirs to a kingdom of which Solomon in all his glory was but a faint type."

"Charles," asked Mr. Herbert, "do you know what the military girdles were made of?"

"Of metal generally, sir, I believe. Darius had a

belt of gold, from which hung his cimeter; and the Gauls had girdles of silver and gold."

"The seven angels in the Apocalyptic vision, who were to pour out destructive vials of the wrath of God," observed Mr. Herbert, "were girt about with golden girdles, in token that they had strength and courage; that they were ready for, and zealous in their work. Can you tell me, Charles, why soldiers wore the military belt? they had no loose robes to gather up."

"They wore it, sir, to cover the two parts of the breastplate where they were joined. By it the sword was girt to their side; and in it were placed their daggers."

"It was put on," continued Mr. Herbert, "when they wanted to be ready for action; it braced the armor, keeping it close and steady; it also gave strength to the body."

"The girdle of truth," said Mrs. Evelyn, "I suppose, means simplicity of intention, singleness of purpose; binding together all the Christian graces; perfect integrity and uprightness. 'God desireth truth in the inward parts.'"

"My idea is," remarked Aunt Ethel, "that a per-

fect conviction of the truth of the cause in which he is engaged, of the faithfulness of the Master whom he serves, will alone give that fixedness of purpose which arms the Christian soldier for the combat. Let a man be wavering as to the justice and truth of the cause for which he fights, and he will not be girt about for the contest. David put off the armor of Saul because he had not proved it; and he could not encounter his gigantic foe with his armor fitting loosely upon him, for he was a stripling, and could not well wear the armor of men."

"If," said Mrs. Evelyn, "like the Tyrolese shepherd, who, mounting to the rugged heights of difficulty and danger rising before him in his path of duty, wore embroidered on his girdle the words, 'God is good,' we were girded about with a constant sense of God's goodness and truth, we should not fear the weapons of error; our hearts would be fixed, trusting in the Lord."

"The meaning that the passage conveys to me," remarked Mr. Herbert, "is that of *readiness for action:* the belt girded on with its weapons of war, the armor braced, the soldier is ready for marching or fighting. He awaits his orders. He is prepared

to execute them. They cannot take him by surprise. They will not find him unprepared."

"*Your* words," said Mrs. Evelyn, "illustrate the girding about; Aunt Ethel's the girdle of *truth*."

"John Wesley," observed Aunt Ethel, "is an illustration of my idea of fixedness of purpose. Nothing turned him aside from the great object of his life—to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land. Frowns, obloquy, and persecution were as nothing to him. All his early prejudices and prepossessions were thrown aside, when they obscured the path of duty; and, girt about with a deep sense of the righteousness of the conflict in which he had engaged, he never turned back, he never fainted in the life-long warfare to which he had pledged himself."

"Robert Newton," said Mr. Herbert, "is an illustration of my thought. For half a century he was always ready for action, ever girt about, awaiting the call of duty, and springing with the alacrity of a well-trained soldier to meet that call.

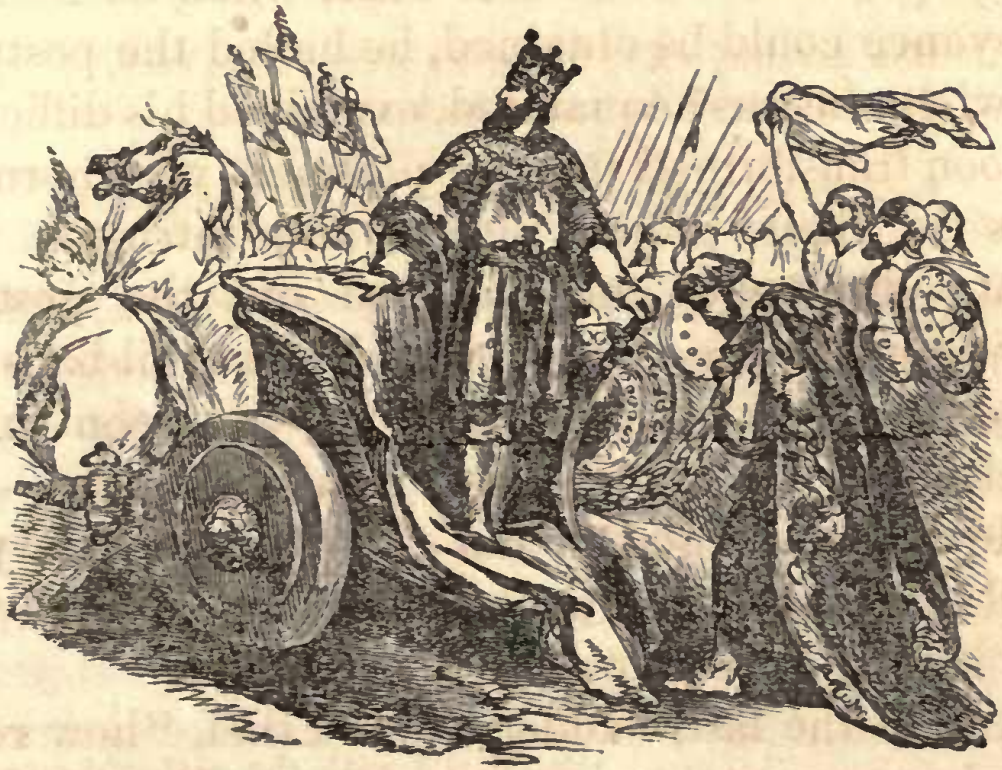
"As far as it was practicable, he preached on his own circuit on the Sabbath; but the early light of the ensuing day generally found him on those missionary journeys which the providence of God seemed to

designate as his peculiar sphere of labor. Always punctual to his appointments, the hours came not without the man; and many anecdotes are related of his skill and ingenuity in making his way through untoward circumstances. On one occasion, after leaving the coach, he walked ten miles, burdened with traveling dress and carpet-bag, rather than disappoint a congregation. At another time, when no horse or conveyance could be obtained, he hailed the postman, with whom he was acquainted, explained his difficulty, and soon transformed into the postman, with horn and pistols in their proper places, and intrusted with weighty dispatches, he galloped on, the postman trudging on in the rear. Leaving the mail-bags and the horse with the postmaster, he was soon in the chapel where the people were awaiting him.

"He traveled eight or ten thousand miles a year, by all sorts of conveyances, and was familiar with every lane and cross-road in the country."

"And at the last," added Aunt Ethel, "how reluctantly he gave up his purpose of attending the missionary meeting in Exeter Hall. From their first establishment he had ever been there, with his words of melody and power, seeking to kindle in the hearts of

others the missionary zeal which burned so brightly in his own. At this last meeting, at which he had hoped to be present, his death was announced. He was found with his loins girt about and his light burning."



CHAPTER VI.

THE BREASTPLATE.

Having on the breastplate of righteousness.—EPHESIANS vi, 14.

How dazzling white the snowy scene! deep, deep,
The stillness of the winter Sabbath day—
Not even a footfall heard. Smooth are the fields,
Each hollow pathway level with the plain.—GRAHAM.

N Saturday afternoon, Charles and his mother rode to the village. The bells jingled merrily, and they were wrapped in warm skins; but a keen, cold wind blew in their faces, and the sky

"Sadden'd with the gather'd storm."

They returned home by the way of the station, where they expected to meet a friend of Aunt Ethel's; and they waited in the station-house for the arrival of the

train. It soon came thundering up. Charles stood and watched the passengers as they left the cars; but the friend whom they expected was not among them. The wind, which was from the northwest, did not blow in their faces with its rude breath, but the snow fell thick and fast.

"It will be pleasant, mother, to have plenty of snow!" exclaimed Charles, in great glee, as

> "Softly, softly, flake by flake,
> Fell the silvery snow."

"I shall have fine rides down hill," he added, "instead of drawing you about the icy garden walks."

Charles's felt hat and the coachman's whiskers were powdered with snow; and there was a great stamping upon the piazza to shake it off before they came into the warm room, which would soon melt it.

Charles stood at the window a long time, to watch the snow falling like a curtain, hiding the opposite shore, and even the river from his view. The distant trees looked like specters, peering through "the fall of frequent flakes," while the nearer trees showed, on

every branch and twig, the white burden softly resting upon them. It snowed, and snowed steadily all the evening. The wind made "wintery music" through the trees all night, while the "whitening shower descended."

> "The night was winter in its roughest mood,
> The morning sharp and clear,"

as the sun shone brightly on a fair, dazzling waste, stretching as far as the eye could reach.

"O, Aunt Ethel," cried Charles, "look how deep the snow is! It covers all the terrace, and is nearly half way up the sun-dial."

"No going to church to-day, I fear," said Aunt Ethel."

"Such a bright, beautiful day as it is, Aunt Ethel, don't you think we could go?" asked Mrs. Evelyn.

"My dear Grace," said Aunt Ethel, "you know nothing of our snow-drifts. I should like you to make the experiment; but we will hear what report the men bring; they are now out with the oxen, breaking the road."

After a while, the men returned. They reported

deep, deep snow-drifts, and no road beyond the one they had broken.

"That settles the matter," said Aunt Ethel; "we must content ourselves at home to-day."

"We have had so many stormy Sundays," observed Mrs. Evelyn, "that it seems strange not to be going to church when the sun shines so brightly."

"We will have church at home," said Aunt Ethel.

A little bell was rung, and the household was assembled in the parlor. After the singing of a hymn, as Mr. Herbert was not well enough to read, Mrs. Evelyn read a sermon on the life to come as an unfolding of the present life; and the necessity of a life of faith and activity to prepare us for a future state of being. It was the sermon of an able minister of Christ, to whose beautiful expositions of truth Mrs. Evelyn had listened with great profit. The thought of his transition in the midst of his days, from his active, useful life to the heavenly rest of which he spoke to his people, gave the sermon a touching interest.

Mr. Herbert then most fervently implored God's blessing, that all might be ready—meet for that glorious inheritance. They all felt that the Church in the house had been pleasant and profitable.

That life to come shed its solemn brightness on their evening conversation, as they talked of dear friends who "walked on the great meadows on the other side of Jordan, which are warmed with an eternal sun, and ring with the triumphs of the humble and true, and the praises of God forever." The vail seemed thin between them and the eternal world, where those whom they loved rejoiced in the sunshine of the Divine presence. There were many tender and sad reminiscences of the past, and many deep thoughts of gratitude springing out of the desolation of worldly joys, and bringing with them the fragrance and beauty of an immortal clime. And thus ended the last Sabbath of the old year.

The new year dawned in cloudless beauty. At breakfast, one or two gifts were found on every plate. Charles had been in a great fever of anxiety to place his little gifts without being observed; and he wanted very much to be assured that they suited the taste of his friends. The inspection of them, and comments upon them, occupied the breakfast hour; and the armor was deferred until the next morning.

"I had some very sweet thoughts just after waking this morning," said Mr. Herbert, as they were seated

at the breakfast-table, "about the Christian armor and the breastplate of righteousness. They looked very clear to me as my head lay on my pillow; but sometimes those early thoughts vanish as we attempt to recall them. They become pale, and melt away, like the first gray tints of dawn into the light of common day. The gradation in the pieces of armor seemed to be very obvious, and taught me a great lesson. I discerned a meaning in the girdle's being mentioned first, although it is the last thing put on. Men are often valiant for the truth, they pride themselves in doing battle for the right, when they only think of the truth as it respects their relations with their fellow-men."

"But the girdle of truth means more than this," said Aunt Ethel; "it means sincerity and simplicity of intention in our conduct toward God."

"I know it does," replied Mr. Herbert; "and to make more plain this meaning, the apostle at once speaks of the breastplate of righteousness. Convinced of the truth, with a single desire to be true, we are sensible of the need of the righteousness which is given to all who believe in Christ. This is the covering for the heart, and this we find revealed to us in

THE BREASTPLATE.

the Gospel of peace, which brings us to the next part of the armor—the 'feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.'"

"That expression," remarked Aunt Ethel, "seems to me to indicate that, when we are girt about with truth, and protected by the breastplate of righteousness, we are ready to go forth to publish this Gospel of peace."

"That would seem to limit the signification to ministers," said Mr. Herbert.

"No, indeed," rejoined Aunt Ethel; "the command is given to all Christ's disciples: 'Let him that heareth say, Come.' Every one should be ready to carry this good news to some Christless home, to some desolate heart."

"Well, then," resumed Mr. Herbert, "girt about with a deep sense of the truth of God, with simplicity of intention, and fixedness of purpose; with the shining breastplate of righteousness, the feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. We are then ready to go forth to his work; and for that we need the shield of faith, a vivid belief in eternal realities. As the heart is satisfied, we feel that the head should be defended, the intellect thoroughly

furnished, and the arm will be nerved to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

"Thus William Carey," said Mrs. Evelyn, "put on his heavenly armor. A poor cobbler, living in an obscure neighborhood, obliged to labor weary days for the pittance that supplied his daily wants, he was girt about with truth; his life was ennobled by a great purpose. He looked over hills of difficulty, and saw gleaming on the shores of far-off India, precious jewels, which he longed to see sparkling in a Saviour's crown. Convinced in his own heart of the might of God's truth, he wanted to bring it to bear against the hoary superstitions of that land of the East. He had fixedness of purpose, a mind steadfastly bent on the attainment of a great good.

"Protected by the heavenly breastplate, his heart glowed and expanded with earnest desire that those exposed to the death which is the wages of sin, should have this sufficient defense. His feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, he was ready to go upon his path of duty. Grasping the shield of faith, he had an intense conviction of the power and reality of eternal things. The fiery darts of the wicked were quenched upon this shield; they reached

not the heart of the lonely man. The jeers of his humble companions, the sneers of those in high places, fell powerless at his feet.

"But girded, shod, and shielded as he was, he needed armor of defense for his head. With legions of wily foes to encounter, he felt that the man of God must be thoroughly furnished. It was not enough that deep in his heart rested the conviction of eternal truth; he must be ready to give a reason for the hope that was in him. In the intervals of patient toil he studied diligently, till the "consecrated cobbler," (as he was called by a clerical wit,) who conned his first Latin lessons over a borrowed grammar, and studied geography by the dim light of a farthing candle, became the fellow of learned societies, the most accomplished of Oriental linguists.

"Better still—his intellect furnished, his head defended by the helmet, the hope of salvation for himself and for others—how nobly, in that distant land that had mapped itself in the visions of his youth, did he use the sword of the Spirit! How it flashed and glittered in his hand as he parried the attacks of the adversary! How his eye kindled with grateful delight as he saw a host of Christian warriors, clad

in Divine panoply, wielding the celestial weapon, the gift of Heaven, which they owed to his patience and his prayers! Through the fixedness of purpose of an obscure country lad, India was dotted with missionary stations, and the Bible given to the people in thirty Eastern versions."

"Our thoughts have dwelt very much," said Mr. Herbert, "on the gradation of these pieces of armor. To return now to our special subject for this morning, *the breastplate.* Its main idea seems to be that it is a covering for the heart—the fountain of life, the seat of the affections and passions."

"In that it shares its glory with the shield," added Aunt Ethel, "which also protects the heart."

"The breast and the head were peculiarly exposed to danger," said Mrs. Evelyn; "and wounds in those vital parts were especially dangerous. The shield of faith, then, held by the Christian warrior, forms an additional defense to both head and heart. Its broad, radiant surface receives the thrusts aimed at the helmet, the hope of our salvation, while it protects the heart from all doubts as to the power and efficiency of that righteousness which is mighty to save."

"That breastplate renders the heart of the Christian

invulnerable," said Mr. Herbert. "There are hours when he may think of loosening his armor; for the providence of God sometimes withdraws him from the din of conflict; but he never thinks of laying aside his breastplate. His heart cries aloud for this defense. It would not rest without it."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SHOES.

And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.—EPH. vi, 15.

THE weather being very fine, Aunt Ethel observed: "This is a beautiful day for a long sleigh ride. We will order the sleigh early, and dine with Mrs. Allen."

The sleighing was perfect; the sun shone warm and bright, and gave a soft rosy tint to the range of mountains, with their mingled hues of white and azure. The road was narrow and winding. The snow had been whirled in fantastic shapes by the wind. In one place, there was a succession of miniature Alpine peaks, shooting up their sharp needles; then a low ridge of continuous hills, and then spiral convolutions of snow.

"There is the snow-wreath," said Aunt Ethel, "to which Scott so often alludes in his poems. Do you remember when the Lady of the Lake sees the friend upon whose arm she leaned,

> "'Who stood in simple Lincoln green,
> The center of the glitt'ring ring,
> That Snowdown's knight is Scotland's king.
> As wreath of snow on mountain breast
> Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
> Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
> And at the monarch's feet she lay?'"

They passed quiet farm-houses, with their great barns, where the cattle stood on the sunny side, looking silent, meek, and with rather a disconsolate air, as if the general aspect of things was not very agreeable to them. The sheep were all gathered together in a sheltered spot. Charles thought winter must be a very gloomy season to them, huddled in the dimly-lighted barns, instead of ranging at will as in the pleasant summer-time, over green fields, beneath spreading trees, and beside murmuring brooks.

As they approached the rural village near which Mrs. Allen lived, they passed a pretty house with a

verandah around it. Charles's mother told him that it was a pleasant home provided by a kind lady for orphan children. Charles saw on the snow-bank, beside the road, the print of tiny feet all the way to the village, where the children went to church.

Mrs. Allen and her two daughters were at home. The day passed pleasantly and quickly away. As they were getting into the sleigh to return, Mrs. Allen sent a mold of beautiful clear jelly to Mr. Herbert, who, she was sorry to learn, was not well enough to accompany them.

The ride home, though not sunny and bright as their morning one, had its own beauty. The sky had a clear amber hue, with broad masses of crimson cloud piled up. The last rays of the sun shone obliquely into the hollows of the mountains, revealing rounded gorges usually invisible, while a soft primrose tint rested on that extended mountain range, clothing it with mellow beauty. After a while, the moon poured its mild luster on the snowy scene; and in quiet, dreamy enjoyment the ride was ended.

As Aunt Ethel was tired with the long ride, and

Mr. Herbert with the long day at home alone, they concluded to defer the conversation on the armor until the next day.

"Have you thought of the armor?" asked Mr. Herbert the next morning at breakfast.

"No, I have not," said Aunt Ethel. "I thought we were not to talk about it till after tea."

"I think it would be pleasanter to have it for our theme at breakfast," replied Mrs. Evelyn; "the morning sun shines so cheerily in at the windows, it seems to brighten one's thoughts."

"My best thoughts for my sermons come to me usually before I rise in the morning," said Mr. Herbert; "and, since my illness, I often find myself too weary in the evening to dwell with profit on any subject."

"Well, then," said Aunt Ethel, "we will have the subject discussed this morning. We have the third piece of armor mentioned by the apostle, the greaves, the protection for the feet and legs."

"Goliath," said Charles, "wore greaves of brass; and I have seen the picture of a Roman boot which came nearly up to the middle of the leg. It was made, I believe, of gold, silver, or brass. Sometimes, too,

GREAVES AND SANDALS.

SPIKED BOOT.

they had spikes in them, that they might walk securely in slippery places, or in rough, uneven ways."

"When do the Orientals put on their shoes or sandals, Charles?" asked Mr. Herbert.

"When they are going to walk out, or going on a journey, sir. They do not wear them in the house."

"What is implied, then, in the Christian's having his feet shod?"

"That he is to go out and fight."

"How can he sit still," said Mrs. Evelyn, "when he is told to go forth and publish the blessed secret, which has been imparted to his own soul, to the souls of others? He is sheltered and defended by the breastplate of Christ's righteousness; will he not hasten to persuade those whose sinful hearts have nothing to shelter them from the justice of God, to obtain that armor of proof, which alone can give a sweet sense of security?"

"The feet shod," said Aunt Ethel, "is an expression which implies a readiness for duty, a willingness to

go forth at its call; no waiting to put on the sandals, but *shod* that we may at once obey."

"That is a beautiful story," said Mrs. Evelyn, "of a monk who, while engaged in prayer in his cell, had a glorious vision of his Saviour looking upon him with eyes of Divine compassion and love. The gloomy cell was irradiated with heavenly light. The monk was gazing upon the heavenly vision in a rapture of adoration, when the bell sounded. It was his hour to give bread to the poor pensioners, who were now awaiting him at the convent gate. How could he leave the glorious vision, to descend to the realities of common life? There was a struggle, but he came off conqueror. His heart was safe and happy, protected by the radiant breastplate of a Saviour's righteousness; but his feet were shod, awaiting the call of duty, which could not be unheeded without guilt. With a lingering look at the brightness, which transformed the narrow cell into a palace of God, he closed the door, and walked quickly through the long corridors. He performed his daily task, gave the loaves to the poor, who carried home, with their bread, a wondering thought of the holy beauty they saw that day in his face, and returned to his

cell, expecting to find that the vision that had gleamed there with celestial radiance had vanished. How was his heart filled with grateful joy to find the glory still there; and to be told that if he had neglected duty and remained, the vision would have departed. This story teaches that the only way to retain the blessedness of the love of Christ in our own hearts, is to be ready to obey his voice, and tell the glad tidings to others."

"The same lesson," observed Mr. Herbert, "is taught on the Mount of Transfiguration. Absorbed in the splendors of that excellent glory, in the glimpse of their Lord, shining out in the divinity of his nature, through the vail of his humanity, the disciples would willingly have remained on that mount of blissful contemplation. They felt that it was good to be there. They would fain have built three tabernacles, that they might detain the heavenly visitants from the skies, and gaze forever on the glorified countenance of their Lord. But it was not good for them to remain there. A great work awaited those eye-witnesses of this heavenly glory; and to many people, and tongues, and nations, were they to testify of their crucified and risen Lord."

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

"They wished to stay on the mount of vision," added Aunt Ethel; "and there was the poor lunatic at the foot, awaiting that power which was to free him from his grievous torment."

"There seems some obscurity about the word *preparation*," said Mrs. Evelyn.

"I think not," rejoined Mr. Herbert, "if you take it in its signification of being prepared, of readiness.

I referred to the original word this morning; and the most literal translation, it seems to me, is alacrity—a readiness to obey the Gospel, and to carry the Gospel to others. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!'"

"That was a favorite text of Bishop Asbury's," said Aunt Ethel, looking up at the portrait of the venerable man, which hung on the wall opposite her.

"And if any man's feet were ever shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, they were his," said Mr. Herbert. "Born near Birmingham, of humble but pious parents, he obtained, when he was but thirteen, the breastplate of Christ's righteousness; and at once his feet were shod, at once he began to publish to his companions this great salvation. At sixteen he began his labors as a local preacher. At twenty-one he became a traveling preacher. At twenty-six he was sent as a missionary to America, where he spent the remainder of a long life in labors that, perhaps, more nearly resemble those of the Apostle Paul than any others on record.

"Feeling himself 'shut up in cities,' he soon extended his journeyings from Maine to Georgia.

Year after year he traveled through the length and breadth of the land—five thousand miles a year—'scaling rocks, hills, and mountains,' 'worming through pathless woods,' fording creeks, and traveling through hideous swamps, following 'blind, tortuous paths,' riding through a 'thick growth of reeds for miles together, and no inhabitants but wild beasts and savage men.' In the heat and dust of summer, and the ice and cold of winter; lodging at night in crowded cabins, filled with men, women, and children, on hard floors, with only a blanket to cover him, or in lofts, through the crevices of which he could see the sky, and feel the wind as it poured in upon him; or else, overtaken by darkness in the mountains, he slept among the rocks; or in a cabin without any roof but a few boards, with rain, and thunder, and lightning, and a hideous yelling of wolves around.

"Preaching to settled congregations in the cities; in arbors, constructed near the churches to accommodate the hundreds who came to hear him; in cold barns to cold people; in school-houses and barracks; in rich men's parlors and log-cabins; in meadows and in the woods; to soldiers; to hundreds of wild, half-savage people, and to congregations of slaves.

"'O! what pay,' he exclaims, 'would induce a man to go through wet, and dry, and fatigue, and suffering, as we do? Souls are our hire.'

"'Such roads, such rains, such lodgings!' he writes. 'Why should I wish to stay in this land? I have no possessions or babes to bind me to the soil. What are called the comforts of life, I rarely enjoy; but God is with me, and souls are my reward. I may yet rejoice, yea, and will rejoice!'

"'Ah, what is the toil,' he says, on another occasion, 'of beating over rocks, hills, mountains, and deserts, five thousand miles a year? Nothing, when we reflect it is done for God, for Christ, for the Holy Spirit, the Church of God, the souls of poor sinners; the preachers of the Gospel in the seven conferences, one hundred and thirty thousand members, and one or two millions who congregate with us in the solemn worship of God.'

"And yet what a deep peace filled his soul amid labor, suffering, and privation. I will read some extracts with which I was peculiarly struck in his Journal:

"'We had the Divine presence in our worship at Sister Stringer's. I am often blessed at the house of

the fatherless and the widow. Now I say to my body, return to thy labor; to my soul, return to thy rest and pure delight, in reading, meditation, prayer, and solitude. The shady groves are witness to my retired and sweetest hours: to sit and melt, and bow alone before the Lord, while the melody of the birds warbles from tree to tree, how delightful!'

"'I found it good,' he says, at another time, 'to be alone by the solitary streams and silent woods, to study the welfare of Zion, and pray for her prosperity.'

"'I am kept in great peace, and a Divine serenity all day.'

"'I felt,' was his language, 'wholly given up to do or suffer the will of God; to be sick or well, and to live and die at any time, and in any place—the fields, the woods, the house, or the wilderness. A sweet peace sits upon my soul. Glory be to God for such resignation.'

"'My mind enjoys great peace and sweetness in God, and I find myself much given up to him. It is very seldom I feel a thought, much less a desire, contrary to his holiness.' 'My soul at present is filled with the Holy Spirit. I have a

glorious prospect of a boundless ocean of love, and immense degrees of holiness opening to my view. Seven times a day do I bow my knees, to utter my complaints before him, and to implore an increase of his grace.'"

"There was the secret," said Aunt Ethel, "of his deep peace. Amid his abundant labors, and the care which came upon him of all the Churches, he devoted two hours a day to retired meditation and prayer. The barn and the solitary place frequently witnessed his devotions. He rose at five; and his first waking hour was one of solemn prayer. He says at one time, that he was continually engaged in prayer. How well I remember his last visit here. The infirmities of age were coming upon him; and we felt that we should see his face no more. Before he left, he requested all the household to be called in. He spoke to each of them fervently and earnestly. I hoped for some precious words of counsel; but, when he came to me, he was so exhausted by the efforts he had made, that he merely pressed my hand affectionately as he bade me farewell. I stood on the piazza looking after the carriage through my tears, and that was the last time I saw him.

"On his visits to us, he always had family prayer three times a day, kneeling down immediately after dinner, and leading our devotions. And how faithful he was, conversing individually with every member of the family, plainly and pointedly, about the concerns of their souls."

"Who can estimate," said Mrs. Evelyn, "the amount of good resulting from the labors of such a man in his annual journeys over our widely-extended territory? He sowed seed broadcast beside all waters. How much of it has sprung up to make glad the solitary place! how many sheaves have been gathered into the garner of the Lord! How the broad field whitened to the harvest beneath the eye of the faithful sower! How the little ones became a thousand, and the small ones a strong nation, as he crossed the Alleghanies, penetrated to the frontier forts, traveled through the rice and cotton lands of the South, and, passing along the Atlantic border, made his way through New-England to the snows of Canada.

"Prayer went up from wide-spread prairies, whence prayer had never ascended before; woods were vocal with hymns of praise, which rose for the first time in

their deep solitude; words of warning, exhortation, and entreaty, came to the dwellers on the lonely hill-side and in the log-cabin in the wilderness. At every house where he lodged, and almost at every house at which he stopped, he prayed with the family. Shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, he never paused or rested in his toilsome path of duty; never put his shoes from off his feet till, released from the 'shell of infirmity,' he was called home to his rest.

"*Rest!* a new feeling to the brave old warrior. From youth to age, the shield of faith on his arm, his head adorned with the shining helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, of which he said, as did David, when he asked for the sword of Goliath, which had been laid up as a trophy in the house of the Lord, 'There is none like that, give it me,' was constantly in his hand; 'praying with all prayer and supplication of the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance:' this had been his life. His armor never loosened till he heard the voice of the great Captain of his Salvation saying, 'It is enough!' and then this hero of a thousand battle-fields entered into his rest—calmly, without a strug-

gle, on a Sabbath day in March, 1816, in the seventy-third year of his age, and the fifty-fifth of his ministry."

"Felix Neff," said Aunt Ethel, "was a remarkable instance of this alacrity in the service of God. You see, Mr. Herbert, I am literally adopting the version of the word you have given us. Having been made a partaker of the righteousness which is by faith in Christ Jesus, he ardently longed to proclaim it to others; and seeking a field which none would covet, and few would accept, he went to the fastnesses of the rocks; to the abodes of squalid poverty. The forefathers of the Protestants of the high Alps had for six hundred years withstood the usurpations of Rome. With unyielding courage they had scaled the loftiest rocks, and had been driven by persecution from one fastness to another; worshiping God in caverns of the earth, and amid the rudest scenes.

"When Neff entered upon this arduous field of labor, he found the people very ignorant; their poverty and their isolation had almost banished all but the rudest arts of life. Neff chose Dormeilleuse as his residence. It was the poorest hamlet in his extensive parish, and was frightfully situated on the brink of

a precipice, surrounded during most of the year with ice and snow. He became to this desolate people a teacher, minister, and friend. He endured for their sake and the Gospel's unparalleled suffering. Instructing them in the arts of life, as well as in that wisdom that cometh from above, he carried the Gospel from hamlet to hamlet; and God gave him many seals to his ministry, and, at length, took him to his reward. His life was a beautiful instance of self-sacrifice. He died of a disease contracted by his unhealthy food and excessive labors. His life was given for them."

"This subject," said Mr. Herbert, after a moment's pause, "illustrates finely the power of Christianity. Even in this description of the weapons of war peace occupies a prominent place; as if to show that in the very heart of this conflict there is peace."

"And the end and aim of Christianity is peace," added Aunt Ethel.

"Yes, the sum and substance of it a covenant of peace with God, a promise of peace in heaven."

"The word peace," resumed Mr. Herbert, "occurs in a central position in the description of these six pieces of armor; and it may suggest the thought that

all this warfare is to keep the soul in peace, by overcoming the enemies who delight in war. 'Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.'"

"This peace can only be won by perpetual war," said Aunt Ethel, "till, in the better land, where the inhabitants shall learn war no more, we may lay our armor down, and rest forever from our conflict."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHIELD.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.—EPHESIANS vi, 16.

He went up the mountains and powder'd their crest;
He climb'd up the trees, and their boughs he dress'd
With diamonds and pearls; and over the breast
Of the quivering lake he spread
A coat of mail, that need not fear
The downward point of many a spear,
Which he hung on the margin far and near,
Where a rock might rear its head.—HANNAH GOULD.

THE next morning, Charles said, "O mother, look what beautiful frost pictures there are on the windows."

"Yes," said his mother; "a great artist has been at work, decorating all the windows in the country side. Look what exquisite tracery! what delicate embellishments! Princes would give great sums for

glass decorated after this fashion; and years of toil could not produce specimens of ornamented glass so beautiful as the thousands now sparkling in the windows of stately dwellings and lowly cottages."

"O mother, look at this pane dotted over with stars and heads of lances!" Charles exclaimed, pointing at the window-pane.

"With 'bevies of birds and swarms of bees,'" continued his mother. "Here is a bit of Alpine scenery, high mountain peaks and craggy summits, on one of which is a goat looking over a precipice."

"And here, mother, is a hill fringed with graceful branches of fern. And there is an old castle, with a bridge thrown from one projecting point of rock to another."

Charles found new pictures on the parlor window; but they were only partially covered, and the clear glass revealed a scene of wondrous beauty. The frost had thrown a soft veil over every twig and branch; and the trees were most lovely in their dazzling winter foliage. A fairy vision for the few still morning hours, ready to melt away in the sunbeam, or to be dissolved by the wind's rude breath.

"People who live all this winter in the city," said

Aunt Ethel, "have no idea of the variety and beauty of winter scenery. They imagine that the country must look dreary in the absence of verdure; and they have no conception of the dazzling world of purity and glory which takes the place of the green world of light and shadow upon which the summer sun shines. What varied scenes have been presented to us the successive mornings of this week: 'hail, snow, and vapors, stormy winds, fulfilling his word.' We must ride this morning to enjoy the frost scene."

"You must go soon, then," said Mr. Herbert, "for an hour's sunshine will strip the trees of their fleeting honors. What an image of the glories of man's life, which is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

The sleigh was ordered, and, warmly wrapped up, Aunt Ethel, Charles, and his mother started for a ride.

Most graceful was the larch, with its delicate, feathery spray. The pendent twigs of the maple, fleeced over with the frost, looked like the blossoms of the chestnut. The green tassels of the pine gleamed through their white sheath; and the somber masses

of the cedar looked like great branches of white coral.

"It is more poetical to liken the foliage of the cedar, frost-covered as it now is, to white coral," said Mrs. Evelyn; "but they certainly look like heads of cauliflower."

"I remember," said Aunt Ethel, "an unfortunate allusion made by a public speaker to painted cauliflower. He seemed to imagine that cauliflower was some choice plant of our gardens. As we were speaking of it, and wondering what he could mean, poor old Chloe said, in a very meek way, 'I think, ma'am, by painted cauliflower he must have meant purple broccoli.'"

After they had ridden a mile the scene had lost its beauty, and the frost had vanished from the trees. They could not understand why the fruit orchard, and all the trees about Wood Lawn, should be so richly vailed with frost, while the woods and open places they were now passing were perfectly bare, or with a very slight rime upon them. When they reached the river, being told that the ice was perfectly safe, they rode over the ice-bridge. There was a road across, on which were many sleighs, and people

on foot; and yet they found it difficult to feel safe with the broad river imprisoned beneath them. How wonderful that its waters, rolling as they do in their fullness and their might, defying all man's powers to arrest or imprison them, can be so stayed and transformed by the silent influence that God sends forth! "By the breath of God frost is given; and the breadth of the waters is straitened."

"The Mexicans," said Charles, "told Cortes that he was a liar, to try and make them believe that water could ever be made solid enough to afford a firm footing."

"We cannot wonder at their incredulity," said Aunt Ethel; "all their past experience would tell them that the thing was impossible. Faith, perfect confidence in the truth of the man who told them of this fact, was needed, to enable them to believe it. And such is the confidence we should have in the truth of God's word, when it tells us of things of which our experience cannot assure us, and far beyond the comprehension of our reason."

Miss Osborne, Aunt Ethel's friend, was very glad to see them, and they spent the day very pleasantly. There was a picture over the mantle-piece of a lovely

young girl, in a simple white dress, with her rich brown hair braided around her graceful head; large, dark eyes, and a sweet expression of simplicity and gentleness on the fair young face. She was gathering roses, and she had on her arm a basket, filled with clustering buds and flowers.

"Dear Lina," said Aunt Ethel, musingly, as she stood looking at the picture, "how like the roses she passed away! Hers was one of those 'flower-like natures,' that seem to be given for a joy and a blessing."

"Yes," replied Miss Osborne, "every one loved Lina; even those who saw her casually have some pleasant remembrance connected with her."

There were other pictures on the wall and flowers in the window, and a daphne, upon which the rays of the descending sun looked lovingly, filled the room with its delicate fragrance.

"It is time for us to be on our way," said Aunt Ethel, "for we ought to be home before sunset."

A cold north wind swept down the river as they crossed it. It was a keen, penetrating wind, that chilled them thoroughly; and they were glad when

they reached the eastern bank of the river, and drove toward the south.

"Just at the setting of the sun," exclaimed Aunt Ethel, as they drove up to the door. "We have got home in good time."

The tea was refreshing after their cold drive; and "the smile of the winter hearth" looked very cheerful as they gathered around it.

"Now for the shield!" exclaimed Charles.

"Can you tell me, Charles," asked Mr. Herbert, "what a shield is?"

"It is a piece of defensive armor, sir, wielded by the left arm, to ward off the blows of darts, swords, and spears," replied Charles.

"Of what was it made?"

"Sometimes of wicker work, or of board covered with leather, or folds of stout bull's hide; or it was made of gold or brass."

"What did conquerors do with shields taken in battle?"

"They were hung up as trophies. On David's Tower, built for an armory, there hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men."

"Did Solomon take any shields of mighty men?"

THE SHIELD.

"No, sir, he was a man of peace; but he made two hundred targets, and three hundred shields of beaten gold, and hung them up in the house of the forest of Lebanon."

"Do you know what became of these shields?"

"No, sir."

"I will tell you. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was a wicked king. In his reign, Shishak, King of Egypt, came and took away all the golden shields; and Rehoboam made shields of brass to hang up in their stead."

"This Shishak," said Aunt Ethel, "is the great Sesostris of history; and on an obelisk, on which were inscribed the names of the kings who paid tribute to him, is found the name of Rehoboam, King of Israel. How many incidental illustrations of the truth of Scripture have been furnished of late by the discoveries of science."

"It is thought," resumed Mr. Herbert, "that these golden shields were merely ornamental, unless they were used by Solomon's guard on days of solemn procession. Many of the shields thus hung up as trophies were without handles; and on one occasion it was spoken of as a sign that war was anticipated,

that there were handles on the shields, that they might be hastily snatched from the walls, and be ready for use.

"The Carians, who arrived in Egypt in the reign of Psalmitichus, appeared in brazen armor, and gave the shield its handle. Before them, such as bore shields only managed them by means of a piece of leather suspended from the neck over the left shoulder."

"Do you remember," said Aunt Ethel, "the passage in Isaiah, 'Arise, ye princes, and anoint your shields?' These shields might have been of leather, that needed oiling to render it pliable, or of brass, that had become rusty from disuse."

"The Tower of David," said Charles, "must have looked very pretty, with a thousand shields hanging upon its walls."

"In the Middle Ages," replied Mrs. Evelyn, "they wished to imitate the ancient Eastern custom of hanging shields, as trophies, on the outer walls; but as, under the influences of a sterner climate, the shields would have become entirely defaced, and would soon have lost their original brightness, they substituted shields carved in stone, which may now be seen on the walls of many a tower and castle in Europe."

WARRIORS WITH SHIELDS.

"How were the shields ornamented, Charles?" asked Mr. Herbert.

"In ancient times," replied Charles, "the leather shields were studded with shining nails, or bits of metal called bosses; but afterward the knights wore

their coat of arms, or device, emblazoned on their shields. The Crusaders bore a cross on their shields."

"The Carians," said Mr. Herbert, "were the first who added ornaments to their shields. How rich this emblazonry was, we may judge from the description Homer gives of the resplendent shield of Achilles."

"Its broad rounded disk," said Mrs. Evelyn, "gave a fair field for the skill of the artificer; and as each knight was known by his shield, it became a matter of knightly ambition to have the shield richly chased and ornamented. I think if our spiritual eyes were opened, we could discern beautiful things emblazoned on the shields of Christian warriors. On one we could see displayed the lion, the emblem of courage; on another the lamb, an emblem of meekness; on another the dove, an emblem of gentleness. And what twining branches of amaranth, what delineations of celestial scenery—of the windings of the river of life, of the leaves that are for the healing of the nations, of the golden city and the gates of pearl, and the sea of glass mingled with fire, and the rainbow round the throne—might be seen emblazoned on these shields of faith."

"We must each have our own shield," said Mr. Herbert. "No knight would have gone into battle with the hope of being protected by the shield of another. We must exercise faith each for ourselves; our own hand must lay hold of the shield.

"'Each on himself rely,
As only in his arm the moment lay
Of victory.'"

"It seems to me," said Mrs. Evelyn, "though my idea may not be very orthodox, that the shining breast-plate makes the soldier a conspicuous mark for the shafts of the adversary. Before the man has put on his armor, before his heart is protected by the breast-plate of Christ's righteousness, he is exposed to a mightier vengeance than that of the prince of the power of the air, who will let him be in peace, secure of a final triumph over him, if he can but prevent his arming himself with the Divine panoply. But when this wily foe sees the Christian warrior girding himself for the contest, then he sends forth the fiery darts, which can only be quenched by the shield of faith."

"Charles," asked Mr. Herbert, "what were the fiery darts in ancient times?"

"They were darts, at the end of which were two brands of tow, which being lighted, the flame was fanned by the wind as the darts flew through the air to the shields of the enemy. The rough shields of leather quenched these fiery darts."

"Do you know what projectiles are used in modern warfare, Charles?"

"I think I do, sir. There are bombs, canister shot, solid shot, musket bullets, grape-shot, Minié rifle balls, and pistol bullets. In ancient times, there were only stones, darts, fiery darts, and arrows."

"A very comprehensive answer," replied Mr. Herbert, with a quiet smile. "I think the details you have been reading of the war in the Crimea must have enlightened you upon this subject. But there is a holy war going on about us, whose incidents are not chronicled in the daily journals, but of which the angels take note. There are fiery darts, 'a rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire,' the temptations, the evil suggestions of the great adversary, against which the Christian can only interpose the shield of faith."

"In the comforting assurance to Abraham, 'I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,'" observed

Mrs. Evelyn, "the word shield occurs for the first time in the Bible. What beauty is given to the image at once! How safe was Abraham in the strange land, and among strange people, with such a mighty protection! What could harm him, encompassed as he was with God's favor as with a shield?"

"And we, too," said Aunt Ethel, "can claim the same promise: the 'Lord is our shield; his truth is our shield and buckler.'"

"He is a shield," said Mr. Herbert, "to all those who put their trust in him."

"What a prayer," said Aunt Ethel, as she looked musingly into the fire, "is that of David, in the eighty-fourth Psalm: 'Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed!' Christ, the mighty shield held over his people: how safe those who rest in his shadow!"

"'Above all, taking the shield of faith.' Here," said Mrs. Evelyn, "in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, is the last mention of a shield in the Bible; as if the word were henceforth to be consecrated to holy uses."

"A soldier," remarked Mr. Herbert, "in choosing an earthly shield, would not choose one too large. He would select one suited to his size; one that he

could use easily and gracefully. But not so with the celestial shield; the larger it is the more easily it can be used, and the more entire the protection it affords. And this shield is sometimes so large, that it not only shelters the wearer, but extends its broad disk of protection over those who have no armor; as in the case of a father of a family, who often protects his whole household by the mighty ægis of his faith. But when that shield is removed, those who have before felt secure, now feel how perfectly defenseless they are without the whole armor. The removal of that protecting shield awakens in them the conviction that they must, without delay, obtain for themselves, from the

"'Celestial armory, shields, and helms, and spears.'"

"Goliath," said Charles, "did not carry his own shield; but the man that bare it went before him, and he was vanquished."

"Did David wear any armor, Charles?" asked Mr. Herbert.

"No, sir; he had just put off the armor of Saul."

"Had he no armor of any kind?"

"O yes, sir; he had spiritual armor."

"Yes," said Mr. Herbert, "the beautiful youth was

clad in Divine panoply. It was invisible to the eager lookers-on, but it entirely protected the shepherd boy.

"'High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
His beaming shield emits a living ray.'"

"'Thou comest to me,' were the calm words of the stripling to his giant foe, 'with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from thee, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.' Here was the broad shield, that protected not only the fair stripling who held it up so fearlessly, but the whole army of Israel."

"David's confidence and courage," said Mrs. Evelyn, "reminds one of the heroic Earl of Stratherne, who, at the battle of the Standard, in 1138, exclaimed, 'I wear no armor! yet those who do will not advance beyond me this day.'"

"Another thought strikes me," continued Mr.

Herbert, after a moment's pause. "We are often called, unexpectedly, to severe trials of our faith. David only thinks of carrying a little parched corn and some loaves to his brethren, and he is on his way to a conflict which was to give victory to the hosts of Israel, and which was to be memorable throughout all time. How readily he took up the shield of faith, when called to encounter the boasting foe, who defied the armies of the living God."

"He did not take it up for the first time," rejoined Aunt Ethel; "for he had already proved its celestial temper in his conflicts with the lion and the bear. He knew that the Lord that delivered him out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine."

"We may see, too, in this beautiful story," remarked Mr. Herbert, "that the taking up of this shield excites the malice of the wicked. What jeers and taunts were uttered by David's eldest brother, when he saw him so fearlessly behind his shield. 'Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.'"

"This feeling of envy," replied Aunt Ethel, "had probably been awakened by his being anointed as the future monarch of Israel."

"We read of no outward manifestation of it, however," said Mr. Herbert, "until he holds up this mighty shield that he had won in lonely conflicts on the hills of Bethlehem."

"The Macedonian phalanx," said Aunt Ethel, "was invincible while their ranks were unbroken. What a description that is:

> "'An iron scene gleams dreadful o'er the fields,
> Armor in armor lock'd, and shields in shields,
> Spears lean on spears, on targets, targets throng;
> Helms stuck to helms, and man drove man along.'"

"I think," said Mrs. Evelyn, "those lines of Milton are much more beautiful:

> "'All in a moment through the gloom were seen,
> Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
> With orient colors waving: with them rose
> A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
> Appear'd, and serried shields in thick array,
> Of depth immeasurable: anon they move
> In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
> Of flutes and soft recorders.'"

"Yes," replied Aunt Ethel, "they are a picture to the eye, and music to the ear. But to return to the Macedonian phalanx, their union made their strength; and thus Christians are invincible. When closely bound together, they hold shield to shield, and form an impenetrable defense against the enemies of their salvation."

"I believe it was the Macedonian phalanx," said Charles, "that were marching up a defile in the mountains of Thrace, when the barbarians rolled down loaded wagons upon them. They were ordered by Alexander, when there was space, to open their ranks and let the loaded wagons pass them; but when the defile was too narrow to allow of this, they were directed to lie down, and hold up their shields closely interlocked above them, while the heavy weights rolled over them."

"We may learn a lesson from this," added his mother. "Heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, may pass away over the interlocked shields of faith held up, and held closely together by Christians prostrate in humility and prayer."

"William Shaw," said Aunt Ethel, "with his broad shield of courage and faith, protected the poor

trodden down Caffir women. One may imagine the cruelty with which they were treated, from one instance that came under Mr. Shaw's notice, of a mother tied by her son to the stake, whence she twice escaped, and was twice brought back by her unnatural child, who left her there to die of hunger, and listened unmoved to her agonizing cries for bread and water. Mr. Shaw obtained the enactment of laws for their protection; and they named him *kaka labafars*, the woman's shield."

"I think his noble wife," said Mrs. Evelyn, "took up the shield of faith. When all discouraged him from his enterprise of penetrating into the land of the Caffirs, so noted for their treachery, falsehood, and cruelty, how bravely she urged him to go. Accompanying him, with some attendants, to the line that divides the British colony from Caffraria, where he would encounter the lion and the wolf in the forest, and only find refuge from these wild beasts in the branches of a tree, or in an African kraal; while others besought him not to expose himself to suffering, danger, and death, her faith faltered not. But with a loving woman's heart, she breathed 'words of lofty cheer;' and as they knelt together by the solitary

wagon, ere they parted, their faith grew strong as they put their trust in God, who compasseth the righteous as with a shield.

"He has just returned to England, after thirty-six years of missionary labor; and what a joyful reward must come to him, even in this life, from a retrospect of those years. When the wagon of the missionary made the first road tracks in Caffraria, there was no dwelling in the land but miserable kraals, made of sticks covered with straw. Not a Caffir knew a letter; nor was there a book in the whole region, or any mark or hieroglyphic for the representation of ideas. Not an article of dress was worn but bullocks' hides thrown over the shoulders. No implements or utensils; not a plow in the land. No notion whatever of religion. It was almost certain death for an unarmed man to penetrate these wilds. Now the land is dotted with mission villages, formed of houses of compact form, divided into several apartments. There are fifty or sixty chapels, where congregations of decently clothed natives assemble on the Sabbath day, and reverently join in the services. Grammars of the language have been made. The Scriptures have been translated, and hundreds of the Caffirs are

able to read them. Hundreds of these barbarians are now Christian men, and some of them local preachers."

"I cannot recollect," said Aunt Ethel, "a more striking illustration of the sustaining power of faith, than that furnished by the history of Perpetua. She was a noble Carthaginian lady, who became a Christian, and suffered martyrdom in the persecution under Severus. Young, beautiful, and accomplished, the world offered all its allurements; but, turning from them all, she 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'

"She was adored by her pagan father, who, to save her, used every art which either hatred to Christianity or affection for her could suggest. Obloquy and persecution, though doubly painful to a nature so delicate as hers, were borne with Christian meekness and unshaken fortitude.

"Her hardest trial was to withstand the prayers and tears of a father whom she loved with all the tenderness of filial devotion. Grace alone could have enabled her to pass victoriously through this sore conflict. What, then, were the tortures with which she

was threatened by her enemies? what the terrors of the amphitheater in which she was to die?

"She did not pass into the arena with any of that ostentation of joy and triumph that seemed to mark some other martyrs. True woman to the last, her demeanor was marked by humility and gentleness. She was clothed in white, and stood with a calmness and dignity, not unmixed with joy, to await her fate. The wild beasts paused ere they rushed upon their prey; and among the spectators, yet more savage than they, a murmur of pity and admiration was heard. Recovering a little from the first shock of the attack, with maidenly modesty she wrapped around her the raiment which had been torn in the contest; and commending her soul to God, she was soon ushered into the presence of her Lord.

"How firm a hold she must have taken of the realities of the unseen world, to have so nobly renounced all that earth could give in exchange for Christ, with reproach, persecution, and death."

"And this is the blessed Perpetua, of whom I have heard you speak so often," said Mrs. Evelyn; "she needed the shield of faith in that trying hour. And now I am going to tell Charles a story which I have

lately read, and in which I think he will be much interested. It will show him how the shield of faith can protect women and children against bands of armed soldiers.

"There is a pretty, curious old town in Germany. The streets are narrow and the houses very quaint, with their pointed gable ends toward the street. Some of them rising like a series of steps, and others with curiously carved cornices, with one story projecting a little beyond the other, till, in some narrow streets, they almost meet at the top. There is one house somewhat isolated from the rest. It is at an angle where two streets meet, and is built with so many projections, and jutting windows, and carved friezes, that it is quite a study.

"One cold, cold afternoon, in midwinter, men moved quickly, muffled up in firs. The silent frost was penetrating everywhere. It was a time for people to close their doors, and gather round the firesides, where they could be protected from the biting blast. But the quiet inhabitants were all leaving their homes. There was a bustle of preparation in every parlor and kitchen. The young and old were wrapping their garments about them, and making

ready to go out in the cold. Securing their precious things about their persons, and taking their children in their arms, they were leaving their pleasant homes. There were dismay and confusion through all the streets. Groups of citizens fleeing into the country. And why was all this?

"They had heard that the French regiment, called the Pitiless, on its retreat from Moscow, was only three leagues off, and was to quarter in their village that night. There was everything to fear from the revelry and excesses of soldiers, who acknowledged no right but that of the strongest.

"In the queer old house of which I have spoken there was no bustle of preparation. By the fire, in a large old room, that seemed to be used for both kitchen and parlor, sat an aged woman and her two grandchildren. Unable from her lameness to leave home, her grandchildren would not forsake her. Her faith in God enabled her to feel that they might be safer there than when fleeing from danger.

"'The vesper bell has not sounded as usual,' said she; 'I suppose, because there is no one to ring it. Theresa, sing our favorite evening hymn.'

"The young girl, seated on a low seat near her

grandmother, sang with sweet, but rather tremulous voice, the following hymn:

"'The golden sun is in the west,
The earth is sinking into rest;
Day hath its turmoil and its strife,
Day hath its end, and so has life.

"'The moon is rising from the sea,
Till its dark wave shines gloriously;
If we have peril, fear, and thrall,
We have a Christ to gild them all.

"'When earthly light is almost dark,
And earthly hopes have miss'd their mark;
And sorrow's cup is to the brim,
God is with us, and we with him.

"'O God! till darkness goeth hence,
Be thou our stay, and our defense;
A wall when foes oppress us sore,
To save and guard us evermore!'

"'We have no wall about us to-night to protect us from our enemies,' said the boy, mournfully, as the last notes of the hymn died away amid the rafters of the shadowy room.

"'He will be our wall Himself,' said the old lady, reverently. 'Think you His arm is shortened?'

"'No, grandmother; but the thing is impossible without a miracle.'

"'Take care, my boy; nothing is impossible with God. Hath he not said he will be a wall of fire unto his people? We must trust him fully, and he will be our wall of defense.'

"They sat quietly by the fireside. The wind moaned down the large open chimney, and the snow fell softly against the window pane. Steadily the snow fell; and the wind drifted it in high banks, covering the sheds, streets, walls, and paths of the silent and deserted town. And yet there was peace by that quiet fireside; the peace which can alone be felt by the mind that is stayed on God. Few words were spoken. They held one another's hands, and looked into the fire, and listened, in the pauses of the storm, to catch the blast of the French trumpets. At nine o'clock the sound was faintly borne to them on the breeze; a few hurried blasts swept past them, intermingled with sounds of trampling feet and loud voices, and all was still.

"Their hearts beat almost audibly; and they drew closer together, as they felt that they were now in the midst of their enemies. Helpless age and defense-

less youth! what armor had they wherein to trust? One mighty shield of faith! and safely they rested in its broad shadow.

"Every house was a scene of revelry; great fires were kindled. Altars were ransacked. The soldiers, with their songs and their wine-cups, their oaths and their blasphemy, made the streets ring, and strove to drown the remembrance of intense cold and terrible privation in those hours of drunken merriment.

"Still the little group in the quaint old house sat peacefully through the long, long hours of the night, till morning dawned, and showed them the wall of defense which God had built around them. Exposed as was their house, from its position, to the eddies and currents of the wind, the snow had so drifted about them, that the doors and windows were completely blocked up; and the French soldiers, eager to be sheltered at once from the driving storm, had entered more accessible houses. With the daylight they had left the town.

"Wind and storm had fulfilled God's word, and encircled those who put their trust in him, with a wall that protected them from their enemies; a wall not of fire, but of snow."

"That is a beautiful story!" exclaimed Charles. "I think this conversation about the armor has been the pleasantest we have had. I thought there would be more to say about the shield than about anything else."

CHAPTER IX.

THE VISIT.

There are few trifling failures more bitter in our journey than that of a tired traveler mistaking his road. What effect must that tremendous failure produce upon the human mind, when, at the end of life's unretraceable journey, the traveler finds that he has fallen upon the wrong track through every stage; and, instead of arriving at the land of blissful promise, sinks forever into the gulf of despair?—MRS. MOODIE.

S the letters and papers were brought in the next morning after breakfast, Charles said, "Letters for everybody but me. I think one of my little cousins might write to me. But what makes you look so pleased, Mr. Herbert?"

"Why, my dear boy, my letter tells me that my brother Henry, and my friend, Arthur Hale, will be here this evening."

"Hurra!" cried Charles, jumping up with a bound,

and making the circuit of the room. "How glad I shall be to see your brother; for I am sure he will go out with me, and ride on my sled! What time will they be here, Mr. Herbert?"

"In time for tea, I think, Charles. They are to leave home at two, and ride thirty miles in a sleigh."

"Now, Charles," said his mother, "come to your lessons; you will have time to talk about this visit afterward."

Charles went into the library with his mother, and said his lessons very well. He then went to Mr. Herbert's room to recite his Latin to his kind friend. He liked his Latin lessons very much, because Mr. Herbert was so patient with him, and explained it to him so thoroughly, that it enabled him to understand it; and he tried to study well, so as to give Mr. Herbert as little trouble as possible.

When he had finished his Latin lesson, he sat down by the table, and spent some time in drawing. He thought that room the pleasantest in the house. There was the "still air of delightful studies." The curtains and the bright wood fire on the burning hearth gave it a warm glow. There was a book-case, filled with books, a table, with writing materials, and two

large chairs beside the fire. Here Charles spent most of the day, reading or drawing; occupying himself quietly, so that he did not disturb Mr. Herbert. But the happiest hour for Charles was at twilight, when he read a chapter in the Bible aloud to Mr. Herbert, who talked to him of the loving Saviour, who died for him, and told him of his faults, and where he was to go for strength to overcome them.

Tea time came, but the expected guests were not there. Charles fancied every few moments that he heard the jingling of sleigh-bells; and he would run into the hall to see if they were coming. He could not look out into the night, for the windows were covered with frost. After listening "with head upraised and look intent," he would come back with a most rueful countenance, and ask,

"What do you think is the reason they do not come, Aunt Ethel?"

"Well, dear, I think they may be here yet. It is a long ride, and they may have stopped by the way to rest their horse. Perhaps you will see them at eight o'clock."

They lingered long over the tea table, and did full justice to the chocolate and nice light muffins.

Eight o'clock came, and Mr. Herbert said, "They will not be here now; had we not better have prayers? It has been so intensely cold to-day, I scarcely thought they would come; and yet I feel more disappointed than I thought I would be."

The hour of devotion came with its words of holy truth, its hymn of praise, and its evening sacrifice of prayer.

The next morning, after breakfast, two of Mr. Herbert's parishioners came in to see him. Charles went out to slide down hill. He had taken two or three fine rides, and was dragging his sled to the top of the hill, when he saw Mr. Henry Herbert and his friend drive up to the door. He was the first to welcome them. "How glad I am to see you!" he cried. "Do go on quietly and surprise them, for they do not expect you now." Charles enjoyed the exclamations with which their entrance was greeted.

"Why did you not come last evening?" asked Aunt Ethel.

"The cold was so intense that we thought it best to stop at the shire town for the night, and drive up here in the morning. We had a very cold ride yesterday afternoon; the keen northwester blew directly

in our faces. It carried off my hat, and led me bare-headed over fences, and through three fields, knee-deep in snow, to recover it."

Charles's day was greatly enlivened by the new-comers, who went out with him, and gave a new zest to his winter pleasures.

Sunday morning was cold and cloudy. Aunt Ethel and Mr. Hale went to church at the village in the morning. Immediately after dinner, Mrs. Evelyn and Charles, Mr. Henry Herbert, and Mr. Hale, set off in the sleigh for the Rosenberg Church. Mr. Herbert took the road he had been accustomed to in the summer; and they had ridden some distance, when Mrs. Evelyn exclaimed, "You ought to have taken the other road; we have not tried this since the deep snow, and I am afraid it is not broken. I ought to have told you before, but I was thinking of something else."

"Do you think we had better turn back now?"

"It seems a pity to retrace our steps, and perhaps we may find this road opened; so let us go on and try."

So on they went, down and up hill; and then the road was very faintly defined. The road lay on the top of a snow-drift; and there were so few marks of

its having been traveled, that Mrs. Evelyn said, "I think the road must be better beyond Mr. Van Tromp's. He has to carry milk every day to the station, and he certainly could not have traveled this road."

Mr. Herbert was obliged to drive very carefully on the slanting snow-drift, lest they should turn over.

"Here we are at Mr. Van Tromp's," said Mrs. Evelyn.

An old farm-house on one side of the road, and great barns on the other. But the large weeping willow, that had so long afforded its ample shade, had fallen in the autumn; and the piles of wood that now lay near the fragment of its old trunk showed that it was destined to give light and warmth to the winter hearth, instead of cooling shade to the way-worn traveler: a mission of usefulness in life as well as in death. How many human beings come short of this.

But thoughts of the willow-tree gave way to the perplexities of their position. An unbroken snow-drift lay before them: no visible road. The rail fence was taken down in one place; and there seemed to be a sleigh track through the fields. Mr. Hale ran

out into the field to see if the road would lead them out again. Mrs. Evelyn called to Mr. Van Tromp, who came out at once, his face imbrowned by constant exposure, and the gray locks of his uncovered head streaming in the wind.

"Mr. Van Tromp, is the road open beyond here?"

"I scarcely think it is. It has been open once; but the snow has drifted since, and closed it up. I have not been out that way this winter."

"Then you don't think we can go on?" said Mrs. Evelyn, rather dolefully.

"You might get stuck fast, and not get back soon," said Mr. Van Tromp, with an ominous shake of his head, and a merry twinkle in his eye.

"We must turn back," said Mr. Herbert; and calling out to Mr. Hale, who was exploring the road in the field, he jumped out of the sleigh. Taking the horse by the bridle, he stepped out into the deep snow, while Mr. Hale and Mr. Van Tromp lifted the sleigh around.

"We were almost there," said Mrs. Evelyn, as they rode slowly along the almost unbroken road. "There is the church, and see what a circuit we shall now have to take."

"What a disappointment it is," remarked Mr. Herbert, "to find that we have taken the wrong road, and to be obliged to retrace our steps and start afresh on the right one."

The snow, which fell gently when they started, now filled the air and almost blinded their eyes, and after quite a long ride they had only returned to the gate, their point of departure.

"Shall we go on?" asked Mr. Herbert. "Will the people expect preaching this stormy day? You must say the word, go on or go home."

"Well, go on, then," said Mrs. Evelyn; "I think the people will be there waiting."

It was a pretty road in summer, winding through woods, crossing a stream which dashed over large masses of rock to the river, and then skirting the bank of the river, which spread out into a noble bay. If the sun had shone out the scene would have been beautiful even now. But winter scenery needs the brightness of the sunbeam to light it up. A field of snow loses its chill, cold look as the sun emerges from behind a dark cloud, and at once sparkles as if strewn with diamond-dust.

At length they reached the church, and the transi-

tion from the snow and cold without to warmth and comfort within was very agreeable. The church was nearly filled with people, quietly awaiting the arrival of the minister. They were very glad to see Mr. Herbert's brother in the pulpit. Their pastor had, in his brief season of labor among them, found a warm place in their hearts, and they had been deeply grieved at his illness, which had deprived them of his ministrations. They listened with great attention to the sermon on the healing of blind Bartimeus. All felt that afternoon how good it was to be in the house of the Lord, to sing his praises and to listen to his word.

It snowed steadily all the way home. The air was so cold that our party were glad to shake the snow off their garments, and come in and get well warmed before a blazing fire.

Mr. Herbert came down to tea, bringing in his hand a sermon which Aunt Ethel had taken to his room. It was a bunch of lovely flowers from the green-house—a pink and white Camellia, some sprigs of white lauristinus, and a scarlet carnation. As Mr. Herbert was detained from church by illness, Aunt Ethel took him a sermon every Sunday afternoon from these "voiceless preachers."

Charles had a great deal to tell Aunt Ethel about the sermon he had heard. He had it all pictured before him; the crowds going up to keep the solemn feast, the poor blind beggar sitting by the way-side, and hearing that Jesus of Nazareth, that wonderful being of whose miracles he had heard, was passing by; the earnest, plaintive cry of the sightless one, "Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me;" the Saviour pausing on his way as that voice of entreaty met his ear, the gracious message to Bartimeus, and the trembling eagerness with which he approached one whom his faith told him had power to open his eyes. Charles saw the eager petitioner and the mighty Helper, as if the one were crying "Light," and the other saying, "See;" the crowd looking with curious eyes, and the ray of vision lighting the upturned face of the suppliant, as his newly-opened eyes rested on the loving face of the Son of Man. How his thoughts must always have reverted to that first moment of sight, and to the glorious object upon which his eyes first rested. Well is it for us when our spiritual eyes can be thus satisfied with a believing view of Christ.

As some of the household had been deprived by the storm of the usual religious privileges of the day,

more time was devoted to the usual season of family devotion. The Bible was read, a hymn sung, and prayer was offered, first by Mr. Henry Herbert, then by his friend and his brother. It was a hallowed hour; God's presence was felt in an especial manner, and those who knelt before him recalled, with grateful thanksgiving, the promise of the Saviour, verified in their own personal experience: "Where two or three agree as touching one thing, it shall be granted unto you."

CHAPTER X.

THE HELMET.

And take the helmet of salvation.—Eph. vi, 17.
And for a helmet, the hope of salvation.—1 Thess. v, 8.

HARLES was very sorry to say good-by to his friends the next morning after breakfast. He had spent a pleasant Saturday and a happy Sunday with them, one of the happiest Sundays, he said, that he had ever passed, and he was unwilling to have them go. After they had gone, however, he went very cheerfully to his lessons, and tried to be a good boy and please his mother.

"We have had no conversation upon the armor for some days," said Mr. Herbert, in the evening; "now that we have our usual quiet party of four, we must resume our theme. I believe the helmet is the subject to-night. What is the helmet, Charles?"

THE HELMET.

"A kind of metal cap to protect the head."

"How many kinds of helmets had the Jews?"

"Two, sir, I believe, both made of brass. The Assyrians wore pointed helmets, and some of them had crests."

"Who added crests to the helmets?"

"I do not know, sir."

"They were added by the Carians," said Mrs. Evelyn.

"Some barbarous nations who fought against Alexander's army," said Charles, "wore the skin of a lion's head, or some other fierce animal, on their helmets to inspire terror, and I suppose that gave the idea of a crest, for they used to have figures on their helmets that inspired dread."

"It is in allusion to these emblematic figures," observed Aunt Ethel, "that the apostle speaks of hope as adorning the helmet of the Christian warrior."

"Yes," said Mrs. Evelyn; "each warrior had his device on the crest of his helmet, and by that, as well as by his shield, he was known; and so a Christian may be known in the crowd in which he mingles, by the towering crest of his helmet—the hope of salvation."

"And being defensively armed all but the head," remarked Aunt Ethel, "can we think of any better defense for that part than would be afforded by the helmet of hope? I know of nothing which would so lift a man above the doubts and temptations of the world as such a helmet—a hope of salvation from every enemy here and from all evil in the world to come. And if we remember that the component parts of hope are expectation and desire, we see how the expectation of final triumph would cover his head in the day of battle. This world is not the object of his desire. How can he, with a head uplifted by so high an aim, stoop to anything low or groveling? How can frowns or persecution harm him, when they cannot reach that land of security where alone he looks for rest and reward? The allurements of this world will be unheeded by one who, like Bunyan's pilgrim, places his hands in his ears, and cries out, 'Life, life, eternal life!'"

"It was this helmet of hope," said Mrs. Evelyn, "that covered the head of the early Christians; how loftily they bore it before princes and kings! How crowns paled before its resplendent brightness! How it gleamed amid the crowd of armed heads! Those

helmets of iron and brass were not proof against heavenly weapons. How the Christian warrior, with his crested helmet, stood unmoved in the amphitheater with ranks on ranks of cruel spectators, breathing out defiance and scorn, with the savage lion ready to rush upon his prey! He would not cast away this confidence, his exceeding great reward, though the shields of the earth were offered for his defense, if he would but take the helmet from his brow."

"Aunt Ethel," said Charles, "you said that the Christian expects to triumph over his enemies, and that that expectation gives him strength. That was the spirit with which the Greeks fought; they expected to be victorious, and they almost always were so."

"There are hours," remarked Mr. Herbert, "when our reason tells us that there is little prospect of our succeeding in the warfare. Our enemies are so many and so mighty, that if we merely listened to our reason we would give way to despondency, our heads would be uncovered, and our hearts would grow faint. But if we put on this helmet, this hope of salvation, how secure we feel. How can the adversary assault us when this salvation lifteth up our head?"

"The ancients," said Mrs. Evelyn, "were very care-

ful to have their helmets of the most highly-tempered steel, for they were peculiarly exposed to the blows of the battle-ax. Now we know that *our* helmet is sure, that it is highly tempered, that there is no flaw in it, but that it can safely withstand the thrusts of our enemies."

"The very weight of a battle-ax," observed Charles, "would kill a man if it touched his head. King Richard's great battle-ax had twenty pounds of steel in it. He carried it to Palestine, where it became so famous, that when their horses started the Saracens would say, 'Do you think you see King Richard and his battle-ax?'"

"But we are talking of helmets now, not of battle-axes," said his mother; "cannot you tell us some story of a helmet or a plume?"

"I have often read," answered Charles, "of soldiers in battle being animated to press on with courage against the enemy by seeing the white plume of their leader dancing before them, but I cannot remember the particular instances. There is that story of the three feathers the Prince of Wales wears on his crest."

"What is that?" asked Aunt Ethel.

"Why, in one of the battles between the French and the English, the blind old king of Bohemia, hearing that the battle was going against the French, had the bridle of his horse fastened to the horses of two knights who rode one on each side of him, and went with him into the conflict. He with his two knights were slain by Edward, the Black Prince, who took the three ostrich feathers that had waved over the helmet of the blind king, and in memory of that day's victory, adopted them as his crest, with the motto, 'Ich dien,' I serve."

"Kings sometimes wore crowns on their helmets," said Aunt Ethel.

"The ancient Jewish kings who feared the Lord, never went into battle without this helmet," observed Mr. Herbert. "Joshua, the leader of Israel, and David, the king, always inquired of the Lord whether they should go out to meet the enemy. If they were told to go, they were sure of triumph. It mattered not whether their enemies were five or five thousand. With this hope of success they went out fearlessly to the conflict. The Lord put on their helmet, the hope of salvation, of victory over their enemies; and there was nothing that could make them afraid."

"The helmet," remarked Aunt Ethel, "is the crowning piece of the Christian's armor. His ambition is fired by a noble object. The higher a man's aim is, the more manfully will he contend. The mercenary soldier, who fights for money, will not go into battle with the same spirit that actuates one who strikes for his home, his altars, and his native land. And so with the Christian; when the helmet is put on, when the hope of eternal life crowns his head, inspired by this lofty, ennobling motive, he will be steadfast and unmovable."

"A man of great deeds," said Mrs. Evelyn, "will be a man of high hopes. When Wilberforce set himself deliberately to the twofold work of his life—the abolition of the Slave Trade, and the superintendence and promotion of those benevolent movements which were destined, in so many ways, to benefit and bless God's poor children, the helpless and the outcasts of the earth—he was animated by a great hope, which gave him no heart to listen to the thousand voices of eloquence, wit, and fashion, which had formerly made music in his life. This great hope gave a new element of steadfastness to a character naturally variable. The motive power was now

given to impel the whole man to new walks of piety and usefulness. The brilliant man of wit and fashion became, for a score of years, an earnest, laborious philanthropist. His time was absorbed with great public duties. 'But then,' he writes, 'we have God and Christ on our side; we have heavenly armor; the crown is everlasting life, and the struggle, how short, compared with the eternity which follows it!'"

CHAPTER XI.

THE SWORD.

The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.—EPHESIANS vi, 17.

WHEN Mrs. Evelyn entered the parlor, Aunt Ethel exclaimed: "Bad news this morning. The green-house is frozen!"

"What a pity! it has looked so beautiful and blooming. I saw a light in it last night, and I was afraid it was on fire; but I found it was George with a candle, trying to protect his plants.

"Yes," replied Aunt Ethel; "he was up last night till past eleven o'clock; he was so afraid his plants would be frozen. He had a great fire in the furnace, but it would not draw, while the west wind blew with such violence as it did last night; and the poor plants are stiff with frost this morning."

"Have you seen them?" asked Mrs. Evelyn.

"No; I do not want to look at them."

"But you do not look distressed, Aunt Ethel; I think it is a very great loss."

"Well, so do I; but I think some of the hardier plants are saved. The geraniums it will be easy to replace by slips in the spring. But I must go and console poor George, by telling him that it is not his fault."

George looked as if he needed consolation. His eyes, filled with tears, were fixed upon the plants of which he had been so proud, and which but the evening before were in such full leaf and flower. They were now hanging their drooping heads. The geraniums in their luxuriance blighted. The heliotropes, which had filled the air with fragrance, all withered. George was watering the plants, and drawing an awning over the glass roof, that the sun that shone so brightly might not complete the work of destruction. There was a group, however, near the glass window that opened into the library—some Camellias, lauristinus, and Daphnes—which were uninjured, and looked verdant amid the forlorn drooping of the late blooming ornaments of the green-house. Thomas, who was

assisting George, gathered a striped rose-colored and white Camellia, which retained its stately beauty, though its petals were stiff with the frost, and gave it to Mrs. Evelyn. It made a beautiful ornament for the breakfast table, though in the heat of the room its delicate tints soon faded into a dull brown.

"The sword is our topic this morning," said Mr. Herbert. "Charles, we look to you to tell us what it is."

"I think everybody knows what a sword is," replied Charles. "Helmets and shields are not used, but the sword is still worn by the soldier's side. It is a piece of offensive armor, worn on the left side, and fastened with chains to the belt."

"Layard says," remarked Aunt Ethel, "that the Assyrian swords were of very fine workmanship, and rivaled the Greeks' in elegance of design. The hilt of the sword was frequently ornamented with four lion's heads; two with part of the shoulders making the cross-bar or defense, and two more with extended jaws were introduced into the handle. The end of the scabbard was formed by two entire lions clasped together; their heads turned outward and their mouths

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open. Sometimes the scabbard was engraved with groups of figures, flowers, and animals."

"Charles, can you tell me where the word sword first occurs in the Bible?"

"I think, sir, it is where Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise; and the angel with the flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life, was placed at the east of the garden."

"What were the ancient swords made of?"

"At first they were made of brass, and afterward of steel. The scabbard would sometimes be made of silver, and the hilt of gold, studded with jewels. But the Damascus blades were finer than any; the steel was so highly tempered, that the sword could be bent until the point met the hilt, without breaking. Those ancient warriors did not allow their swords to grow rusty in the scabbards; they kept them in constant exercise."

"What sword is the Christian told to use, Charles?"

"The sword of the Spirit, sir."

"Yes, the only offensive weapon mentioned:

'In heavenly panoply, divinely bright,'

the Christian takes the sword of the Spirit."

"Which is the word of God," added Aunt Ethel; "how finely it is described in the parallel passage in Hebrews: 'For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'"

"What wonders have been wrought by this celestial weapon," said Mrs. Evelyn. "How has it struck terror to the heart of the king on the throne and the priest before his altar. Hosts of armed men have quailed before its power, and empires tottered to their fall. How has it changed the face of the earth, driving away, before its resistless force, barbarism and cruelty, that law and order might shelter with their benignant influence all things lovely and of good report. How are the glitterings of that sword of the Spirit now to be seen penetrating dark masses of idolatry, and making of its vanquished foes new soldiers for the Church militant!"

"Yes," said Mr. Herbert, "Christianity is an aggressive movement. We are not merely to make good our defense, but we are to make continual inroads into the land of darkness, that we may bring

thence captives to fill up the ranks of the Lord's hosts."

"A hundred swords might leap from their scabbards," said Mrs. Evelyn, "and not produce so powerful an effect. What are the successes of the world's greatest captains, of Alexander, Napoleon, and others, who have desolated the hearth-stones of kingdoms, and have shaken the world with their tread, compared to the victories achieved by the word of God?"

"And our great weapon," said Aunt Ethel, "is the sword of the Spirit."

"None but that," exclaimed Mr. Herbert. "Many have thought this sword of too ancient a date; they prefer swords of modern workmanship, with scabbards more richly engraved, with handles more highly ornamented. But these modern swords are not like the 'two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow;' the wounds they inflict are only skin-deep; brightly as they may flash, they do not penetrate."

"They have not the right Jerusalem blade," said Aunt Ethel, "as Mr. Greatheart exclaims in Pilgrim's Progress. And do you remember Mr. Valiant-for-truth's answer? 'Let a man have one of these

blades, with a hand to wield it and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an angel with it. He need not fear its holding, if he can tell how to lay on. Its edge will never blunt. It will cut flesh and bones, and soul and spirit, and all.'"

"I do not remember that," replied Mr. Herbert; "but I remember very well Christian in his armor of proof, battling with Apollyon, and that, during the heat of the conflict, Christian's two-edged sword flew out of his hand, and then Apollyon felt sure of him. But Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise,' and gave him a deadly thrust; and when Apollyon fell back he made at him again, saying, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us,' and with that Apollyon spread his dragon wings and sped him away, and Christian saw him no more."

"Satan was vanquished by the same sword of the Spirit," said Mrs. Evelyn, "by which he had been defeated in the wilderness by our Lord. With his entire knowledge of eternal things, with his profound heavenly wisdom, with his outlook into all spiritual existence, our Divine Master replied to the great ad-

CHRISTIAN THRUSTING APOLLYON.

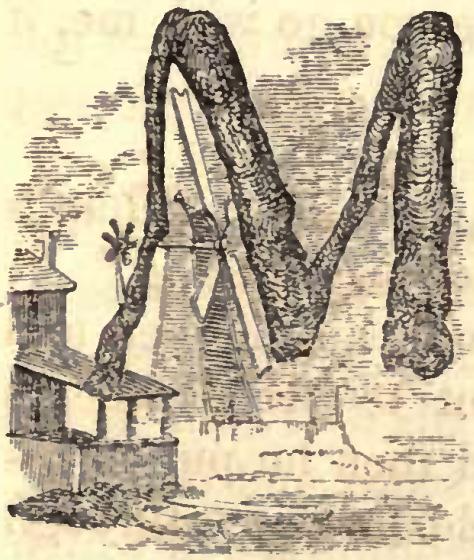
versary, as any of his disciples might have done, from the word revealed to man. 'It is written,' prefaced every reply to the suggestions of Satan. In the sorest need the word was all-sufficient. He needed not to go to the armory of Heaven for weapons not given to his followers. The sword of the Spirit achieved the victory. And by thus using the sword, what honor he has put upon it. How can his disciples seek for earthly weapons, when they are permitted to wield the sword of the Lord that hath put to flight armies of the aliens? The arm of the weakest disciple is nerved with new strength when this sword is drawn."

"The enemies of the Christian," remarked Mr. Herbert, "are ignorant of the secret of his strength. They know not that the Christian's worst foes are those that enter into the citadel of his heart, the anger and impatience excited by their scorn and defiance. They see not the play of that invisible weapon which slays these enemies, though they are amazed at the result of the conflict, as the man stands before them, calm and unmoved, amid showers of arrows, even burning words. 'He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city;' and this his adversaries confess, themselves being judges."

CHAPTER XII.

PRAYER.

Praying with all prayer and supplication of the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.—EPHESIANS vi, 18.



MR. HERBERT, after breakfast, said: "The weather is so fine to-day, that I think I can venture on a little longer walk than usual. I am going to see our good friends at Ellesmere, to thank them for their many kindnesses to me during my illness."

"Illness," said Mrs. Evelyn, "seems a ready passport to their favor. There is scarcely a house in all the country-side, where, at such seasons, their thoughtful kindness has not been manifested. They certainly have heeded the word, 'I was sick, and ye visited me.'"

"It is interesting," replied Aunt Ethel, "to observe the diversity of character among Christians. With a general family likeness, there are such striking points of individuality; each character bearing one Christian grace in somewhat bolder relief than the rest; so that we may group together a number of Christian friends, each one suggesting to our hearts some one of the things that are lovely and of good report."

"May I go with you, Mr. Herbert?" asked Charles.

"I shall be well pleased to have you go with me, if your mother will allow you."

"Mother, may I go?"

"If you say your lessons well, you may. That is the first business to be attended to this morning."

Charles went into the library with his mother, and said his lessons. He next went to Mr. Herbert's room and recited his Latin; and then he put on his coat to go to Ellesmere. The fields of snow through which the road passed were sparkling with very large snow crystals, brilliant as diamonds. There were curious figures embossed upon the snow, looking like a great map of the world, with its islands and continents.

Mr. Herbert was so muffled up he could not talk

to Charles, who ran hither and thither, traveling up to the top of the snow-drifts, which in some places entirely covered the stone wall, coasting along the ridge, and here and there breaking through the crust, knee-deep in the snow.

"Mr. Herbert, what are all these tracks?" asked Charles, as they passed through the gate at Ellesmere. "Just look at those knolls, they are covered with tracks; and almost all the fields we have passed have been so unbroken."

"I think they are squirrel's tracks, Charles."

"Why there must have been a grand convention of squirrels here. They certainly showed their taste in choosing such a pretty place to meet in. But I wonder they do not hold their conventions in summer, instead of the frozen winter-time."

"Perhaps they are too busy then, in laying up their winter stores, to be attending conventions and chattering. Now they may have nothing else to do, to beguile the long winter days. Here we are at Ellesmere; but we ought to look at this glorious view before we go in."

"It must look a great deal prettier, sir, in summer, when those hills are covered with green grass, and

A SQUIRREL.

those naked trees are all round, and full, and beautiful, with their green leaves, and the river, that is now so immovable, dashes along in the sunshine," said Charles.

"And yet, Charles, it has a wondrous beauty now. Those hills, with their pure robe of white, spangled with brilliants; those trees, with their tracery of

branches and twigs, waiting for the springtime to call out the life hidden in them; and those mountains, looming up so gloriously, at a distance of thirty miles, enfolded in the clear, rosy light. They are all 'beautiful exceedingly.'"

Charles found the parlor at Ellesmere pleasanter than the portico. He did not admire the view quite as much as Mr. Herbert did.

The day passed most pleasantly to Charles. He had pretty books to look at, and a large dissected map of birds and flowers, which took him a long time to put together. He had just succeeded in completing the picture, when a pretty dove flew into the room, and perched upon Miss Eiledon's head.

"O, what a pretty dove!" exclaimed Charles. "Look, Mr. Herbert; did you ever see anything so pretty? What a soft, sober color it has! and what a ring it has round its neck."

"It is called a ring-dove, Charles."

"Just look at it," said Charles, laughing loud with delight, as the dove flew to the pier-table; and, nodding her head to the dove in the looking-glass, cooed repeatedly. "She is very polite to the pretty dove she sees. How pleased she looks."

Miss Eiledon held out her finger, and the dove came and perched upon it. Charles stroked its soft,

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beautiful plumage, and thought it was the sweetest, gentlest thing he had ever seen.

"Of what lesson of the Saviour's does this dove remind you, Charles?"

"'Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves.' I never knew so well what that meant before. I will try and remember it now."

"Come with me, Charles," said Miss Eiledon, "and I will show you what may teach you the same lesson in a different way."

There was a large cage, like a two-story house, in the room in which they entered; and in a wheel attached to it, a squirrel began to whirl about with great velocity. He was a gray squirrel, with a large, silky, bushy tail, very light, feathery, and graceful. When Charles came near he snapped at him angrily, and jumped at him as if he would like to bite him.

"Take care, Charles," said Miss Eiledon, "or he will bite you. Every one in the house has had the print of those savage little teeth upon them but me."

"And does he never bite you?"

"No, he seems to know that he was given to me, and he loves me."

"It is well that such a bad-tempered creature should have some love for somebody," said Charles.

"There are few creatures so entirely bad that we cannot discern some vein of goodness in them, if we look carefully for it."

"How savage he looks," said Charles, as he put a nut in the door of his cage. The squirrel darted in to see what intruder was entering his premises, went into the corner, and lifted up the flannel which served him for a bed, and put his nose to each nut hidden under it, as if to assure himself that his store was untouched, and then he came and gnashed his teeth at Charles in unavailing rage.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Charles; "how unhappy he makes himself for nothing."

Charles now threw a nut in at the window of the squirrel's store-room up stairs, and he jumped up at once to see what was going on there. He kept a vigilant eye on his domicil. He had a goodly store of nuts in one corner, hickory, hazel, pecan, and butter-nuts; and having looked at his heap of provision, he leaped into the lower room. There was a staircase to go down, but he disdained the gradual steps.

"When his room is swept and his bed made up, Charles," said Miss Eiledon, "they are obliged to shut down a window that separates the wheel from his apartments, or he would not allow the intrusion."

"May I call Mr. Herbert to see him?" asked Charles.

Obtaining the permission, he rushed down stairs, exclaiming, "Mr. Herbert, do come and see this gray squirrel; it is the perfect picture of ill-nature. I think it would cure any one of being ill-tempered to see him. He seems to hate everybody, and he is so greedy, always eating nuts and watching over his stores; do come, Mr. Herbert."

Mr. Herbert did not enjoy, as did his young friend, the exhibition of ill-temper.

"Look at that pretty dove," he said, as it lighted in fearless confidence on the top of the cage, and the squirrel darted up and snapped at her; "how sweet and gentle she looks contrasted with this angry squirrel."

Before they went down stairs the dove had flown to her favorite perch, a sleeping figure of marble on the landing-place, and as Charles reached the foot of the stairs it flew on his head.

"O, look, Mr. Herbert, the dove is beginning to know me, and when I was up stairs it ate bread out of my hand."

"Mrs. Eiledon," said Charles, as he stood looking out of the parlor window, "will you tell me what those pretty deep baskets are for? I have seen four

or five of them hanging high up on the trunks of the trees, and I have been wondering what they are hung there for. I thought at first that they might be filled with seed for the little wandering snow-birds, but they look too large and deep for that."

"They are filled with nuts for the gray squirrels," replied Mrs. Eiledon. "There were not as many nuts last winter as they require for their winter store, and Mr. Eiledon has sent a barrel for their especial use."

"Ah," said Charles, "now I know why the squirrels have had their grand convention at Ellesmere. No wonder there was such a gathering together. How the news must have flown far and wide after the first squirrel had come upon the baskets with their bountiful store! What a leaping and scampering there must have been as they turned away from the diminished stores in the hollow trees to feast on their new supply!"

"Perhaps," said Mr. Herbert, "it will make them less industrious next summer, Mrs. Eiledon, if they find their wants supplied without any labor or forethought of their own."

"Were they men and women, it would probably have that effect," replied Mrs. Eiledon; "but as they

are only squirrels, I hope their instincts will teach them better."

"There comes mother for us," said Charles, as a sleigh glided up to the door.

"We are not ready to go," said he, as his mother entered the room; "we have not dined yet."

"No," said Mrs. Eiledon, "they cannot go till after dinner, and then I will send them home."

Charles begged his mother to look at the dove and listen to her cooing, how it began in a high strain and gradually softened down. And then he told her how it loved Ellen Dale, Miss Eiledon's niece, who was now at school; and how it pined away after she had gone, and would eat nothing for two days; and how it would fly to her room to look if she were there, and for two weeks it would not coo at all, but it mourned her absence. "Is it not a loving, gentle little thing, mother?"

His mother told him she had but a few minutes to stay, as she had some purchases to make at the village, and he must defer all further raptures about the dove till the evening, that now she wanted to talk to Mrs. Eiledon.

Charles and Mr. Herbert had just reached home

when Mrs. Evelyn returned from the village, and Charles had a great deal to tell of the squirrels and the dove, and the great contrast between them.

"This has been one of the pleasantest days I have spent this winter," exclaimed he.

"Take care, Charles," said Aunt Ethel, playfully; "I shall feel a little jealous.

"O, but, Aunt Ethel, you know there were so many new things there to interest me, and they were so kind. I am sure I have very pleasant days here every day, but there has been more novelty about this one."

"And now," said Aunt Ethel, "we will have our subject for the evening: 'Praying with all prayer and supplication of the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance.'"

"The Grecian armies," said Mr. Herbert, "used to supplicate the favor of their gods before they went forth to battle, and sacrifices were offered to propitiate the favor of their deities. They believed, religiously too, in their interposition. Fully armed and equipped for battle, they invoked a higher power to give vigor to their arms and to defend them from the attacks of their enemies. It may have been in allu-

sion to this custom of Grecian armies that the apostle, after describing the panoply of the Christian warrior, urges him to pray with all prayer.

> "'Pray without ceasing, pray,
> Your Captain gives the word;
> His summons cheerfully obey,
> And call upon the Lord.'"

"At the time of the Norman invasion," said Mrs. Evelyn, "it was usual to commence the attack with a war song. The Saxons, who had been accustomed before their conversion to sing the song of Odin, now had for their cry 'The holy cross—the cross of God;" while the cry of the Normans was, 'God help us.'"

"There is a beautiful account," remarked Aunt Ethel, "of the preparation of the Swedish army for battle under Gustavus Adolphus; when they were fighting for truth, and liberty, and the right. With what a solemn peal the burst of holy song, the hymn to the God of the armies of heaven, rose from thousands of brave, well-trained warriors."

"How far this world would seem from the other without prayer," said Mrs. Evelyn. "If we could not speak to God, and were not assured that God

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

hears us, we would seem removed to an infinite distance from him—lost in the universe of space; but with that golden chain of communication in our hands, we cannot swing away from his reach."

"It is a fine idea of Isaac Taylor's," said Mr. Herbert, "that if we were permitted to gaze upward from step to step, and from range to range of the vast edifice of rational existence, and then perceive at an infinite distance beyond the lowest steps of the eternal throne, we would feel oppressed not only by created superiority, but by our remoteness from God. We would hesitate, in view of the principalities and powers in heavenly places, to bring our personal wants and wishes to the notice of Him who dwelleth in the circle of the heavens."

"I have often felt that," said Mrs. Evelyn, "in looking at the starry heavens, and wondered how the Maker of those worlds of light could condescend to listen to our feeble words; that, surrounded by the armies of heaven, He could stretch out the hand of his love to wipe the tears from the eyes of a struggling child of earth. And the only refuge from a conviction, that in our insignificance we must be overlooked in the vastness of his creation, is in the

simple assurances of the Lord Jesus: 'The very hairs of your head are numbered.' 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.' We need no more; these

PRAYER.

leaves from the tree of life heal every wound. We can rest with all confidence on these words of gracious love. Our souls come home from their eager questionings into the infinite of space, and rest with calm joy on these words of One, who, knowing our infirmi-

ties, has given us this firm staff of hope to lean upon."

"And prayer," said Aunt Ethel, "brings us into such sensible communion with Him, that it 'makes the darkened cloud withdraw,' and pours around us the sunshine of the Divine presence. We cannot doubt the declarations of Jesus, as contained in his word; neither can we doubt, when in prayer we find ourselves so melted and subdued under a gracious sense of God's forgiving love. Prayer has been beautifully spoken of 'as the flight of one alone to the only One;' and this sacred duty and employment calls forth the noblest faculties of the soul."

"And what a powerful weapon prayer is!" remarked Mr. Herbert. "An old writer says, 'It has commanded the four elements.' Perhaps you can give me some instances, Charles. When did it command the air?"

"When Elijah prayed that it should not rain; and it did not for three years," replied Charles.

"When the fire?"

"When Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel, and God answered him by fire; which came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifices on the altar.

And another time it consumed a captain and his fifty soldiers at the prayer of Elijah."

"When the water?"

"Why, I suppose, when Moses cried to the Lord, and the waters of the Red Sea rose up like a wall, when the children of Israel passed over."

"There is another beautiful instance, Charles," added Aunt Ethel, "when Elijah smote the waters of the Jordan with his mantle, and they at once parted to afford a passage to the man of prayer; and after Elijah had gone heavenward in his chariot of fire, and Elisha was returning alone, he cried out, as he smote the waters with the mantle of the translated prophet, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' And the waters again parted at the voice of prayer."

"And the earth obeyed," said Mr. Herbert, "when she opened her mouth and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Prayer has wrought great wonders. It has made the sun and moon to stand still. It has healed the sick, and called the dead to life. It has stopped the mouths of lions, and made birds of prey ministers of mercy. It averted the doom of the wicked city of Nineveh, and brought Jonah from the depths of the sea. It sent an angel to open prison

gates, and while petitions were winging their way upward it restored the liberated apostle to his praying brethren. As it ascended from the inner prison, with the midnight hymn of praise, an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison and set the captives free."

"And it is now," said Mrs. Evelyn, "exercising its mighty agency, unknown to those who reap its benefits."

"That passage in the twelfth chapter of first Samuel," said Mr. Herbert, "has come home to me with great force, in which the old, gray-haired man of God reproaches the children of Israel with their ingratitude to God, who had crowned their nation with his benefits; and after exhorting them to repent and amend their lives, he concludes with these solemn words: 'Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.' Now we think it well to pray for others, but do we view this duty in as strong a light as that in which it here shines out before us; the omission of prayer for others is sin; we sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for others."

"We may well offer the prayer of David," replied Mrs. Evelyn, "'Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O Lord.' I often feel a measure of self-condemnation when I hear, as I have done to-day, of the death of one with whom, in some relations of life, I have been brought into close contact; and the thought comes, 'Have I prayed as I ought for that person?'"

"I was walking one day with a former pastor of mine," said Aunt Ethel, "and he bowed to a laborer as we crossed the field where he was working."

"'Do you know that man?' I inquired.

"'O, no,' he replied; 'but whenever I see a stranger I see in him one for whom my Saviour died, and my heart goes out in love to him.'

"But I am reminded in this connection still more forcibly of Mrs. Miller, a dear friend of my mother's. The turnpike road was brought very near her house, to the great regret of most of her friends; but when they spoke to her on the subject, she said, 'I rather like it, for I can now from my window see the dear people pass, and I am reminded to pray for them.' How little do we know what prayers may be encircling us with their cloud of blessings. This thought I have just met with, beautifully brought out in 'Worship and Work,' a sermon, by Dr. Williams; let me read the passage to you:

"'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; their works do follow them. Over our heads and tasks, in this nineteenth century, may be now floating installments yet to be answered of patriarchal prayers; petitions to be granted in or after our century, but that were offered by Enoch walking with God ere he went up, and by Isaac, as he strayed forth to meditate at eventide. We enter into the late-springing harvest

from the buried and dead seed that the confessors and martyrs of darker times sowed to the Spirit and to the Saviour, in their fruitless aspirations, all unavailing to men as they seemed. The prayers of Covenanters, who swung in the Grass Market; of Marian confessors burned at Smithfield; of Roman Christians torn, in the first centuries, by the wild beasts, even while they are praying, in pagan amphitheaters; all are encircling and bedewing us with their unspent benefits. Is it not a privilege to fall into the line of such a procession, and to embathe the soul in this cloud of witnesses?"

"It is pleasant to think," said Mr. Herbert, "that our prayers may be doing good after we have passed away from this stage of being."

"I was much interested," said Mrs. Evelyn, "in an account given me by a dear friend, of a poor man, disabled by infirmity and disease from active labor. His face radiant with joy, he met a kind visitor at the door: 'O, sir,' cried he, 'I am so happy; so thankful to the Lord for all his goodness to me!' 'What especial cause for thanksgiving have you?' inquired his friend. 'O, sir,' he replied, 'I feel so rich! I have now a room to myself. The greatest trial in sharing

a room with another family, was the want of a closet, into which I could enter and pray to my Father in secret. I obtained permission to hang a curtain at the end of a hall, and there I retired for prayer; but I could not pray aloud without attracting the attention of others, and I love to cry aloud upon my God. But now, sir, I can call upon God alone, and he will hear my voice;' and, so saying, he led his kind visitor up several flights of stairs, to an attic room. He threw open the door with a sort of exultation. It was very dingy. It had a very small window, high up, and a sloping roof, and it was bare and unfurnished; and yet this man rejoiced more in this humble room than many a rich man in his stately mansion and sumptuous apartments; yea, more than many a Christian in rooms furnished with every comfort, and every aid to devotion. God's presence made the room to shine; and converse with him will make of any place a paradise."

"Mrs. Evelyn," said Mr. Herbert, "do you remember Mr. B., a good man in Melden? He had a very child-like faith. He asked God for the supply of his wants, believing that God heard him because he said he would. He formerly lived in Pennsylvania; and at one time, under a pressure of adverse circum-

stances, he was brought to such destitution that he had literally no bread in his house, and no means of getting any. His wife was sick and helpless; and in his distress he cried unto God, and God heard him. When he opened his door in the morning, he saw on the threshold a letter addressed to him. It contained five dollars; and the writer, who did not make himself known, said that he felt an interest in him, thought he might be in want, and begged him to accept this gift. Never was supply more timely; and the poor man acknowledged it as coming directly from his heavenly Father, who had sent it to him by one of his servants. He never knew to whom he had been indebted till he returned to that place twenty years afterward, when his benefactor made himself known to him."

"There are many such instances on record," said Aunt Ethel.

"Yes," replied Mr. Herbert; "we can readily imagine that, when the needy cry in their distress, the Hearer of prayer can answer by moving the hearts of the willing and obedient, and directing their steps to the home of the destitute."

"I have read of a story about prayer being answered," said Charles.

"Let us hear it, Charles," said Aunt Ethel.

"There was a young lady living in one of the cities of the West, who was very pious, and prayed a great deal for her brother, who was a very wicked young man. He was going to New-Orleans, and was playing cards one Sunday on board of one of the boats on the Mississippi, when a sudden feeling came over him that he was too wicked to live; and, throwing down his cards, he rushed to his state-room, and, falling on his knees, asked God to have mercy on him.

"His companions, who did not wish their game broken up, followed him, and tried to persuade him to return; but they could not succeed. His door was locked; and he told them to go and leave him to himself. There, in his state-room, he wept and humbled himself before God. All his sins seemed to rise up in judgment against him; but he confessed them before God. He asked pardon for Christ's sake, and God heard these fervent prayers, and sent peace to his troubled heart; and he came out with a bright face, and told his companions that he felt a peace he had never known before, and that he was now going to live a Christian life.

"After attending to his business in New-Orleans

he came home, and embracing his sister with a new warmth of affection, told her of the change in his views and feelings. Full of joy, she asked when this wonderful event took place; and she remembered, that at that very hour she had been engaged in a solemn season of prayer to God for her brother's conversion."

"And thus, Charles," said his mother, "did God fulfill his word, 'While they are speaking I will hear, and before they call I will answer.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION.

For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.—Heb. ii, 10.

THE next day, after the little boy had recited his lessons, Mr. Herbert said, "Come, Charles, I am going to walk, and you may come with me, if you like."

"Indeed I will; I do not like to play in the snow by myself, and mother will not slide down hill on my sled more than once a week, so I shall be right glad to go with you. May I take my sled?"

"To be sure you may."

Charles's coat and cap, gum shoes, and a famous pair of red and white mittens, which Aunt Ethel had just knit for him, were soon put on, and his sled was

WINTER SPORT.

ready when Mr. Herbert came out upon the portico. The wind had been very high the night before, and had blown the snow in great drifts along the road. It had entirely covered the stone wall by the great oak-tree, and it was now hard enough to bear him;

so Charles ran to the top of the ridge, and slid down a long distance on his sled.

"O, Mr. Herbert, look there, what a perfect wall of snow!"

"Yes, Charles, that is a beautiful, fair tablet to write upon."

"May I write your name?" asked Charles.

"No, you may not; but you may write your own, if you please;" and Charles, with his finger, made C. E., in capital letters.

"Charles," said Mr. Herbert, "I will write your name here;" and the little boy soon jumped about with great pleasure as he saw his name in fine, bold characters on the smooth face of the snow drift. He begged Mr. Herbert to write it again, and then he drew a face upon the snow. "Now, Charles, we have had writing and sketching enough for one day. Your name looks finely on that bold cliff of snow, and I would not spoil the effect by writing it again."

Charles came home from his walk with rosy cheeks and in high glee. After dinner he rode to the village on the high front seat of the sleigh. It was very bright and beautiful, the bells jingled merrily, and he thought he never had had so pleasant a sleigh-ride.

He pointed out to his mother his name written in several places on the snow, and the large face he had drawn. The snow had been so blown about that it had assumed forms of great beauty; in some places it looked like the sea-beach, with its little patches of drifted sand, and then it was like high walls hollowed out into coves on the sea-shore. There were low ranges of hills and beetling crags, jutting far over, and here and there a solitary miniature mountain, looking quite imposing with its long shadow. One field of snow looked very pretty; overshadowed by a wood, it was striped with white and a sort of grayish blue.

"A pleasant walk and a pleasant ride, and now we will close the day with a pleasant talk," said Charles, as they were seated around the fire in the evening. "My armor looks as bright as ever, and I have a great many more thoughts about it than I had when I first looked at it. What are we going to talk about this evening, Aunt Ethel?"

"About the Captain of our salvation."

"O yes," said Charles; "the soldiers of an army might be well armed for battle, but if they had no leader there would not be much prospect of success."

THE BATTLE-FIELD.

"What a contrast," said Aunt Ethel, "there is between the great captains of this world and the Captain of our salvation. They looked upon men merely as machines to compass their ends. They took no personal interest in them. But our great Leader knows each man by name; he knows his character and history; he has narrowly watched him in every combat; he has bound up his wounds with healing balm; and he has nerved every man's arm in the day of battle."

"Then," said Mrs. Evelyn, "these conquerors had a kingdom to win, a crown to gain. It little mattered to them, in the attainment of this end, how many young, hopeful lives were laid down, how many beating hearts stilled; but the Captain of the Lord's hosts has only the happiness of his followers in view. He encourages them to fight manfully, that each may win a crown of glory and immortality."

"I have read a story," said Charles, "about a general who wished to take Babylon for his sovereign. He presented himself one day at the royal tent with his face cut and mangled. When the king inquired the cause, the general told him that he had a plan by which he thought he might succeed in taking the city. 'I intend,' said he, 'with this scarred and bleeding face, to desert to the enemy, and ask to be led against the besieging army. They will intrust me with a few troops, and I will fall upon your forces and slay two thousand men. Again and again I will make a sally, defeating your troops every time, until I shall have entirely gained their confidence, and then I will open to you the gates of the city. There will be seven thousand of your men slain, but Babylon will be yours.'"

"He was a very treacherous general," said Aunt Ethel.

"I know he was," replied Charles; "but that proves, as you said, that generals care very little for the lives of their soldiers, if they can obtain their ends; but Napoleon loved his soldiers, and how much they loved him!"

"And yet," said Aunt Ethel, "how he strewed the ground with their frozen bodies on his retreat from Moscow! How many thousands were sacrificed to his ambition! Thousands laid down their lives for their emperor, and he accepted the sacrifice. To extend the limits of his dominion, to conquer kingdom after kingdom, he drained the life-blood of France; he took from every family its head and its hope, darkened many a happy home, and filled the land with widows and orphans."

"What a contrast," said Mrs. Evelyn, "to our Leader, who so loves every soldier of his army, that he freely gave his own life that he might save them from eternal death. He fought the good fight; and now, in his invincible might leads on his host, that he may secure to them a perfect victory over all their enemies."

"There is another striking difference," said Aunt Ethel, "between our Leader and the great captains of earth. A career of military glory has a tendency to harden the heart, to inflate with pride, to make a man selfish, domineering, ambitious, and regardless of the rights of others. Alexander, who in his youth had so many fine qualities, after a few years of success, became proud, selfish, and intemperate. When he had slain his tens of thousands on the battle-field, conquered the pride of the Persian king, and taken possession of his palaces and his treasures, he gave up the simplicity of his early life; and the soldiers who had so admired him for his temperance and generosity, saw him adopting the vices and follies of a luxurious Eastern monarch. He grew weary of Parmenio, the aged friend and counselor whom he had respected and cherished in his early years; had him falsely accused of treason, and put to death."

"And Clitus, too," said Charles, "who was so faithful to him, and whom he had formerly loved and venerated, he slew with his own hand, because he told him of his faults."

"But the Captain of our salvation," said Aunt Ethel, "changeth not, neither is weary. He is the

same to-day, yesterday, and forever. He bears patiently with us; he is ever mindful of us; he will not forget us when he hath ascended up on high, and led captivity captive. And when 'the kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents, and the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; when all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him;' then 'he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper.' 'He shall judge the people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment.'"

"Our Leader," said Mr. Herbert, "is faithful and true, and keeps the promises he makes to his people."

"How different from Hannibal. When he addressed his soldiers whom he had led through the wild Alpine passes, where thousands of their comrades had perished, overwhelmed by the avalanches, precipitated over the steep, rocky cliffs, or into the crevices of the glaciers, he cheered them, after their sufferings and toils, by pointing to the sunny plains of Italy, telling them that they should every one have a farm amid those fruitful fields; or in Spain, or Carthage, or wheresoever they pleased; and encour-

aged them to fight bravely against the Romans, who were advancing against them."

"But he did not keep his promises," said Charles; "the poor soldiers who fought so bravely never got a farm anywhere."

"Why did he not keep his word?" asked his mother.

"Because he could not do it. Though he gained a great many battles, he never was master of those smiling fields; and in his old age he had not even a resting-place for himself, but wandered, a heart-broken exile, from city to city, and took poison to escape the malice of his enemies."

"Our Lord keeps his promises," observed Mr. Herbert. "I was very much struck to-day with the declarations of Joshua and Solomon, as to God's faithfulness and truth. When Joshua, old and stricken in age, called all Israel in solemn assembly together, to rehearse God's goodness to them, he makes the solemn declaration:

"'Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concern-

ing you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' The Leader of the armies of Israel had promised them a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey. He had promised to drive out their enemies before them. He had promised them rains, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness; to rid evil beasts out of the land, and to give them rest. And Joshua now called them to witness that there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; that all had come to pass. And then, Solomon, when all the nation were assembled together at the dedication of the temple, having ended the sublime prayer of consecration, blessed the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying:

"'Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he hath promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promises which he promised by the hand of Moses, his servant.' Here these men stand out as lights to show God's faithfulness and truth; first Joshua calls the elders of Israel to witness that God has been true to his promises, and then, four hundred and fifty years afterward, Solomon makes the same declaration before the assembled

nation. And the Captain of our salvation says: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.'"

"We have but one leader," said Mrs. Evelyn. "How often have battles been lost because the leaders differed in judgment, and consequently there could be no decision and promptitude in action. It was Hannibal, I think, who said that one bad commander is better than two good ones; and he had reason to think so, as he beheld the discomfiture of the Roman armies, whose leaders disagreed as to the course of action to be pursued. Now, our Prince tells us that we can serve but one master, and we are only secure of final triumph when we obey his commands implicitly."

"One great element of success," observed Aunt Ethel, "is the confidence an army has in its leader."

"Napoleon's soldiers," said Mrs. Evelyn, "were willing to follow him anywhere, in the face of any danger. They knew that he had wise plans, that he studied carefully and thought clearly; that he was resolute, brave, and fearless; and they trusted him, and believed that he must lead them to victory."

"And Alexander's soldiers too," exclaimed Charles,

"when they saw his white plume waving in the thickest of the fight, felt confident that they would triumph over the countless hosts of their enemies."

"And the soldiers of Christ," said Aunt Ethel, "how triumphantly they may sing: 'Blessed be the Lord my strength; which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, my goodness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield, and he in whom I trust; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory. Then brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle. He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.'"

"Another element of success," remarked Mr. Herbert, "is personal attachment to their leader."

"Napoleon's soldiers," said Charles, "loved him so much that they were willing to lay down their lives for him. The sight of his well-known form, the sound of his voice, thrilled through their hearts."

"The electric effect of the countenance of a leader," said Aunt Ethel, "was manifested, in a very striking manner, at the battle of Hastings. The armies were engaged in close conflict. The Saxons had the advantage of elevated ground. They were banded in a

solid phalanx, and they wielded their terrible battle-axes with such tremendous power that they repelled every attack. The foot and horse of Bretagne began to give way, when a rumor ran along the ranks that William had fallen. Dismayed and unnerved, the Normans quailed before the undaunted Saxons, and were ready for flight, when William rushed in among them, and, lifting the vizor of his helmet, revealed to them the countenance of their leader. Reinvigorated by the sight, they rallied with enthusiasm to the conflict, but as long as Harold lived the Saxons seemed invulnerable. The sun was sinking on that bloody field, but victory was still undecided. William directed his archers, instead of taking aim horizontally, to discharge their arrows vigorously upward. They fell with great effect upon the enemy, and one of them pierced Harold's eye. Their brave leader fallen, the sturdy Saxons gave up heart and hope. A panic scattered them, and the Normans gained a battle which decided the fate of England."

"And the great secret of the Christian's courage," said Mrs. Evelyn, "is his love for the great Captain of his salvation. When hemmed in by his foes, one believing look at Christ, one glance at that counte-

nance of love, the conviction that his Lord is present in that hour of conflict, will nerve his arm and reanimate his drooping vigor. 'Be of good courage' falls upon his ear like the sound of a trumpet, and he is ready to say: 'They compass me about like bees, yet in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.'"

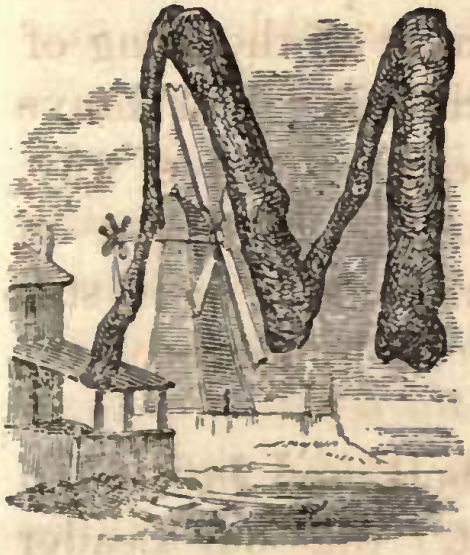
"I know of a story something like the one you told Aunt Ethel," said Charles. "Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, had a very rich suit of armor, which, before a battle, he gave to one of his followers to put on, while he wore a plainer suit. The rich armor made the soldier a prominent mark for the enemy. He was killed, and the armor, elevated on a pole, was paraded about with music and rejoicing. The army of the King of Epirus, discouraged when they thought their brave and heroic leader had fallen, began to give way, when Pyrrhus rode, bareheaded, up and down in front of the ranks, to show them that he was still alive. Their hopes revived, new vigor nerved their arms, and the battle was won."

"And we know," said Mr. Herbert, and he looked joyful and thankful as he said it, "that our Leader lives; that he ever liveth; and that because he lives we shall live also."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ENEMIES.

Angels our march oppose,
  Who still in strength excel,
Our secret, sworn, eternal foes,
  Countless, invisible;
From thrones of glory driven,
  By flaming vengeance hurl'd,
They throng the air, and darken heaven,
  And rule this lower world.—C. WESLEY.



MR. HERBERT said to Charles, "We are going to have a sleigh-ride this morning. It is your holiday, so that you have no lessons."

It was very cold, but the sun shone brightly; and as they rode on, Charles could not help saying to himself some lines which had very much struck his fancy, and which he loved to repeat.

"Hear the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight.
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically swells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells!
Bells, bells, bells!
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells."

Snow is a great leveler. Wheat-fields, corn-fields, and meadow-lands, are all alike wrapped by its dazzling mantle. Here and there some straggling weeds refused to be hidden, and stood up in unsightly contrast with the pure white surface around them. The stone walls, entirely concealed, only looked like a low ridge; but the snow could not contrive to cover up the rail fences, it only heaped up a bank by their side. The woods, with their bare trunks and intermingling branches, cast a shadow, notwithstanding the absence of leaves; and they were glad again to come into the warm sunshine. The withered leaves

still clung to the old oaks, though the wintery storms had made sport of them, and whistled among them, and blown them with mighty blasts. They had left the topmost boughs, but they clung to the middle and lower ones, giving a rugged and forlorn look to the tree; which does not stand in simple grandeur like the elm, graceful in the exquisite tracery of its branches. Evergreens do not brighten a winter landscape. They seem as if they were mourning in sympathy with their spoiled brethren of the forest; and they look dusky, and almost black, like somber sentinels beside the road. The snow sparkled with its crystals.

"What purity!" said Mr. Herbert, as if thinking aloud. "'Whiter than snow!' The longing of the soul for purity, the faith in the cleansing power that is able thus to purify, are breathed in the prayer, 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'"

"David must have seen the snows on Mount Lebanon," said Mrs. Evelyn; "but he could not have looked on so fair an expanse as that now spread before us: not a track in the fields, not a footprint by the roadside."

The deep, deep snow offers no temptation to

wander in the fields, or step away from the beaten path. One well-defined road, from which the driver reluctantly turns aside on meeting another sleigh; a crust on the snow to cut the legs of the horses, and an uncertain depth of snow for the sleigh. Foot-passengers step out into the deep snow, and wait till the sleigh passes, that they may at once step back again.

Mrs. Evelyn often thought, as she saw their reluctance to leave the road, and their immediate return to it, how well it would be if Christians thus dreaded the stepping aside from the narrow way that leadeth unto life; and were they ready at once to return, if they had turned aside, to its secure footing, its path beaten by blessed footprints.

"What are those men doing?" asked Charles, as they rode past a pond where four men were standing near a hole cut in the ice. Charles saw, as they came near, that they were casting a net; and Thomas told him that they were fishing for pickerel.

When they reached the village Charles sat in the sleigh while his mother went into the store.

He was much amused in watching a man who wore a long gray coat with a cape, and a belt about

his waist. His hand was very small, and delicately shaped, and he wore a broad-brimmed hat. He drove a sleigh with two horses. It was a very plain sleigh, a sort of long box put upon two sets of runners. He took a small box out of the sleigh, and took it into a store, and then he went for another; and he moved very quietly, intent upon his work, and not stopping to look about him. Charles saw that one of the boxes the man carried was labeled, "garden seeds;" and Mr. Herbert told him that he was one of the Shakers, from Lebanon, who supply many of the towns with their nicely-put-up seeds.

It was colder going home; the wind blew from the west, and whirled up the snow, that fell almost like a shower upon them. It powdered all the snow-drifts, and threatened to close up the roads again. In a hollow of the hills, Charles saw the prints of many feet, and the tracks of sleighs; and he saw that they had cut down a number of large trees, and piled up the wood ready to draw away. Then, on a creek they passed, he saw men sawing blocks of ice, and drawing them up with a sort of pitch-fork, with a hook at the end.

"I have had a very pleasant ride going, but not

coming back," said Charles, as they drew near home, "my feet are so very cold. Mother, don't those hills look like great iced cakes, as the sun shines on their smooth, glossy surface?"

They found visitors at home. Carrie and Ellen Dale, and their brother Robert, had come to spend the day; and very glad were all to see them. After dinner Carrie sat down to the piano, and sang with her brother Robert some very sweet hymns.

Charles was quite amused, when he went out to see his cousins get in the sleigh, to find that their careful mother had told the coachman to put a shovel in the sleigh, to dig them out of a snow-drift, if they should chance to get fast in one. They had encountered no such danger; and now, well wrapped up, they anticipated a pleasant homeward ride.

"See what a grand piece of coal this is," said Mrs. Evelyn, as she gave a vigorous poke to a great mass of coal, which separated in two smooth pieces, forming a chasm which recalled similar fissures in rocks.

"And if you could look closely enough," replied Aunt Ethel, "you would, doubtless, discover traces of some vegetation of a distant period; some gigantic ferns, perhaps, that long, long ago waved in grace-

ful luxuriance. The dancing flame now is suggestive of bright things and thoughts. What have you to say this evening about the enemies?"

"There is something very fearful," replied Mrs. Evelyn, "in the intimations the Scriptures give us of the personality and power of Satan, the leader of 'the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, until the judgment of the great day.' That this archangel ruined, with all the power of his intellectual strength, his superhuman wisdom, his accumulated experience in the mysteries of the human heart, should be the sworn and implacable foe of the human race, is a terrible thought."

"The power of this thought upon men's minds," said Mr. Herbert, "is very much weakened by the ludicrous associations connected with the devil. It always shocks me to hear this being lightly spoken of; this being who accomplished his dire purpose of hurling our first parents into the abyss of woe; who has for centuries blinded men's eyes and hardened their hearts; who has rejoiced in unhallowed and idolatrous rites; and has triumphed on fields of bloodshed, where men, under the power of hatred and strife, pass

away from the only world of probation. And this mighty being is constantly alluded to with a careless laugh, as a mere myth, whose power is not to be dreaded. The apostle is in very serious earnest when he exhorts believers to be sober, be vigilant; for their adversary the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; but, lest they should be too much afraid, he tells them to 'resist the devil, and he will flee from them.'"

"As if to give us," said Aunt Ethel, "an idea of the warfare we must expect to maintain, we are told distinctly of the conflict in which our Leader was victorious over the adversary."

"As Satan cannot discern the thoughts of the heart," said Mrs. Evelyn, "I suppose that it is the outward manifestation that enables this subtle enemy, who has made man his study for these four thousand years, to know what is passing within, that he may rightly adapt his temptations. How careful we should be, how sober and vigilant, when such an eye of keen intelligence and malice is fixed upon us. How ready we should be to interpose the shield of faith and to wield the sword of the Spirit, weapons all-sufficient in the conflict. He has fled a thousand times before

their ethereal might. He cannot stand before them."

"How important is it for us," said Aunt Ethel, "to be armed at all points. We should

> "'Leave no unguarded place,
> No weakness of the soul;
> Take every virtue, every grace,
> And fortify the whole.'

Our wily enemy sometimes takes the form of an angel of light, and we need an Ithuriel's spear to discover his true character, for no falsehood can endure

> "'Touch of celestial temper, but returns
> Of force to its own likeness.'"

"What is Ithuriel's spear, Aunt Ethel?" asked Charles.

"I think that it is that power of discerning evil under whatever form it may be, that a heavenly-minded person would have; perhaps the quick application of God's word. Goodness feels the approach of evil, and expels it. Ithuriel was a heavenly angel, and therefore as soon as he came in contact with evil he knew and felt it; he could not be de-

ceived by any artifice of the fallen spirit. Do you remember Grace, in the 'Drama of Exile?' Lucifer asks Adam who told him that he was a fallen spirit, and Adam answers:

> "'*Thou;* the prodigy
> Of thy vast brows and melancholy eyes,
> Which comprehend the height of some great fall:
> I think that thou hast one day worn a crown
> Under the eyes of God.'

And Eve's thought of Lucifer:

> "'The precipice of ill
> Down this colossal nature dizzies me.'"

"Yes; and I remember Lucifer's words:

> "'Fallen so deep
> Against the sides of this prodigious pit
> I cry—cry—dashing out the hands of wail,
> On each side to meet anguish everywhere.
> If ye have fallen,
> It is a step's fall—the whole ground beneath
> Strewn woolly soft with promise; if ye have sinned,
> Your prayers tread high as angel's.'

And how fearfully he ends the speech to Adam by uttering his imprecations upon the hapless pair:

"'Who brought death into the world,
And all our woe!'"

"'We wrestle not,'" said Mr. Herbert solemnly, "'with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wickedness in high places.' Not only with the fallen, discrowned angel, but with all the angels who share his doom. They seem to have been permitted to molest man in a more open manner during our Saviour's sojourn on earth than at any other period. We read of many that were possessed with devils. The word devils should have been translated demons, as the original word for the devil is never used in the plural. These demons or evil spirits are abroad upon the earth."

"But the devil and his angels," said Mrs. Evelyn, "are not the only enemies the Christian has to encounter. The world, with its allurements to evil, its clarion trump of fame, its silken tents of pleasure, its army of pleasure-lovers and pleasure-seekers, its crowd of things seen, and the dazzling vail in which it wraps the future, is an enemy that the Christian can safely meet only with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation. Faith in the glorious invisible

DESPISING THE WORLD.

strips off the dazzling vail, exposes all the misery that dwells in those tents of sin, makes the things seen grow pale in the brighter light of things unseen; while crowned with the helmet of hope, the Christian soldier heeds not the clarion voice, for the notes of a trumpet sounding clearer and clearer, and waxing louder and louder, fall upon his ear."

"We have spoken of the world and the devil," said Mr. Herbert; "there is another powerful enemy, the flesh, the rebellious principle, the carnal mind, the corrupt and fallen nature with its tendencies to sin. What a fearful catalogue of the works of the flesh the apostle enumerates in his letter to the Galatians; but how encouraging is his declaration: 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.'"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONFLICT.

Each season had its joys in store,
From out whose treasury boyhood chose.
What though blue summer's reign was o'er,
Had winter not his storms and snows?
The giant then aloft was piled,
And balls in mimic war were toss'd,
And thumps dealt round in trickery wild,
As felt the passer to his cost.—MOIR.

IT was snowing when Charles woke up the next morning. The flakes fell softly without any wind; and they looked very pretty against the dark background of the evergreens on the lawn. Charles stood at the window for a long time after breakfast, looking at the snow falling so quietly, and then he went to his lessons.

"Now for my snow fort!" he exclaimed, as he

came out of the library with a face full of glee; "it has stopped snowing, and I shall have a grand time."

He was soon at work on a hill-side that sloped westward from the house, making excavations in the snow. He at first attempted to build an arsenal with munitions of war: he dug away the snow, and got four smooth slabs of snow, and joined them together, and put a roof on; and then he made a large door. He then piled up his snowy cannon balls, one on top of another, as he had seen them piled up at Governor's Island.

Then he went to work vigorously at his fort. He made the circular walls, and the openings for the cannon; he excavated a moat about it, and put two snow sentinels at the doors; and then he went to the verandah, and tapped on the parlor window, to call his mother out to see his afternoon's work.

"I could have done it a great deal better, mother, if the snow would pack better; yet it does not look so badly after all. But there ought to be two boys to build a good fort."

After his mother had duly admired the fort and the arsenal, Charles said, "O, mother, do look at the

other side of the river, and see the number of men, and horses, and sleighs on the ice. How small they look! just like ants moving to and fro, so noiselessly. What are they doing?"

"Don't you see," said his mother, "that they are sawing huge blocks of ice? and there is a steam engine at work to lift the ice in those large ice-houses on the banks of the river."

"And then, mother, I suppose they send it down in the sloops to New-York. You know the man used to bring it to us every day in a cart, and lift out the piece of ice with great iron nippers, and leave it at the door. So people prepare in winter for summer, and in summer and autumn they lay up for winter; and each season contributes something to the pleasantness of another season."

The locomotive with its long train of cars came thundering past. Charles counted forty-eight cars. It looked very pretty, passing over the causeway, with a thin cloud of graceful smoke partially vailing it, and throwing a dark shadow on the ice. Some time after it had gone, Charles saw a man walking along the iron track, and he stooped and examined the road very carefully; and then he walked on till he met a

man coming from an opposite direction, and he returned with him, and stood still on the place where he had paused before.

"I think the rails must be loose," said Charles; "just look at those men bending over them."

"How watchful they must be," replied his mother, "to prevent accidents; how narrowly they must watch that road, to see that it is all ready for the fiery tread of the iron horse! How many lives are made secure, how many homes happy, by the faithfulness of those men!"

The two men now walked on rapidly together, and Charles lost sight of them. The stars came out bright and glorious in the clear stillness of a winter's night. Charles stood a long time at the parlor window, and looked upon them. There was one very bright star in the west, that trembled on the edge of a dark cloud that set off its brightness. Then he saw the three large stars in the belt of Orion; and his mother showed him the beautiful Pleiades, half withdrawing themselves from the gazer's eye. "How beautiful night is!" exclaimed Charles.

"Yes," replied his mother, "the daylight conceals worlds of light and beauty from us. How these

sparkling orbs beam upon us after the broad glare of day has passed away."

Charles stood a long time at the window looking at the stars; and then he noticed a light moving on the railroad, till it stopped a long time on the same spot where the men had stood still in the afternoon; and Charles was sure that they had gone to repair the track, before the arrival of the next train.

"We are to speak of the conflict this evening," said Aunt Ethel, after tea.

"There seems to me," said Mr. Herbert, as they looked to him for the opening remarks, "an important difference between the soldier of the armies of this world and one who fights in the armies of the living God. The soldier learns to use strategy, he lies in wait for his enemy, he maneuvers that he may gain the victory; but the duty of the Christian soldier is simply to fight; the plans are all made for him, and he has only to act in the present."

"That, I think," rejoined Mrs. Evelyn, "is the duty of the soldier of this world. The general makes the plans, the soldier has only to obey orders, to be at his post. The soldier's position and the Christian soldier's seem to me to be the same."

"And yet," said Mr. Herbert, "the nature of the Christian's conflict is more like that of the ancient warrior who had single combat to maintain, who met the enemy not in an unbroken rank, of which he formed but a small part, but with the might of his own right arm; and his courage, skill, and bravery determined the result. Now the Christian's conflict is alone. It is a personal encounter. His enemies attack the individual man, and he must not only be at his post and be ready to do his duty, but he must be wary; he must be on his guard against his wily foe; he must have skill and courage to fight the good fight of faith."

"There is this difference," observed Aunt Ethel, "that the earthly soldier wore his armor during a campaign, and then it was laid aside, but the Christian can never lay aside his armor; he has a sleepless foe to meet, and he must always be prepared for an attack; he must be watching, for the enemy may come at an hour when he thinketh not."

"We ought to bear in mind," added Mrs. Evelyn, "that the armor of steel, the rich armor worn in heat of day, wearied the limbs, but the heavenly panoply imparts new vigor to the frame. It gives the feeling

CHRISTIAN RESTING WITH HIS ARMOR ON.

of youth and strength, so that its wearer can run and not be weary, can walk and not faint. The burden of sin, that ever presses on those who have not girded on the celestial armor, becomes intolerable; the limbs ache and the frame becomes weary; but the Christian warrior needeth not to put off his celestial armor till he reaches the land where he shall learn war no more."

"In this warfare," remarked Mr. Herbert, "we must not shrink from posts of responsibility. If we are called to command, we may not say that we would prefer serving in the ranks; we must cheerfully take the post assigned to us. I was struck with an incident in Jewish history. When Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, had allied himself with the King of Israel, the latter told him to put on his royal robes and sit in his chariot, and at once Jehoshaphat became a mark for the archers, who shot at him, thinking he was the King of Israel. But when they found that he was the King of Judah they did not try to kill him, but a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and the King of Israel was pierced 'between the joints of the harness.' He shrunk from the conspicuous post, because he thought it the post of danger; but the bow at a venture found him out.

SOLDIER DRAWING A BOW.

And so we should not shrink from a position of influence, should duty call us. We should not say we prefer a less prominent post. God will find us out, and we may be sure that the post of duty, wherever that may be, is the post of safety."

"One solemn thought connected with the conflict," remarked Aunt Ethel, "is the cloud of witnesses by whom we are compassed about. Men are stimulated to bravery by the idea that there are eyes marking the progress of the fight. In the Corinthian games men strained every muscle, because, ranged rank above rank on the seats of the amphitheater, there were all the heroes and great men of Greece. The presence of that august assembly stimulated the combatants to deeds of daring valor. But upon what an arena are we engaged in single combat! Each one waging his warfare alone, while from the heights of heaven look down the ransomed host who have fought the good fight of faith and laid hold on eternal life. With intense interest they look upon those who, armed with the same panoply that defended them and insured their final triumph, are yet engaged in the warfare. A great cloud of witnesses, the great and the good of all past time, a multitude that no man can

number. They know the full value of the crown for which we fight, and intense is their interest as they look upon us."

"There are other witnesses," said Mr. Herbert; "living men look upon us with curious eyes, to see whether in all earnestness we are engaged in this great conflict, and all hell, with intense hatred, watches for our failure, and rejoices when they see a Christian soldier carelessly laying aside his armor, as if there were no foe waiting to assault him in an unguarded hour."

CHAPTER XVI.

A LONG RIDE.

How true she warp'd the moss to form her nest,
And model'd it within with wood and clay;
And, by and by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs as bright as flowers.—CLARE.

"The oriole builds a purse-like nest, of fibers and grasses, artfully woven together, and suspended from a twig of one of the highest branches of a tree."

HARLES said to his mother, as they rode to church on Sunday afternoon, "This is the pleasantest Sunday we have had this year. How I wish that Mr. Herbert was well enough to preach for us!"

The people wished so too, as they crowded around Mrs. Evelyn and Charles after service, to inquire about their beloved pastor. The church was full of people, and the sermon a very excellent one. It was on the

value and importance of every-day life: how its acts are recorded in the character, in society, and in the book of remembrance above. The hearer was exhorted to be careful what records he traced day by day, as he would surely meet them at some period of his future existence.

"Look at my sermon, Charles," said Mr. Herbert, when the little boy had repeated the text of the afternoon sermon; and, so saying, he pointed to a basket of lovely flowers, which he had placed in the center of the table in his room—the white blossoms of the lauristinus, the yellow, feathery spray of the acacia, and the crimson Camellia. "Aunt Ethel said that last Sunday she gave me my sermon, but that to-day she gave me an exhortation, spoken by these sweet flowers from a blighted green-house, breathing cheerfulness and hope amid unpromising outward circumstances. I trust the exhortation will not be lost on me."

"Charles," said Aunt Ethel the next morning, "what say you to a long ride to the shire town of the county to-day?"

"That will be delightful," replied Charles; "are you going, Aunt Ethel?"

"No, dear, I am not at all well to-day, and I would not venture to ride so far. It will be nearly thirty miles, and you must be off as soon as you can get ready."

The memorandum of purchases to be made was soon written, warm wrappings put on, and Charles, his mother, and Bessie, who was going to see her brother, were soon in the sleigh.

The sun shone brightly, and the south wind blew in their faces. Mrs. Evelyn told Charles, who was apt to become restless in a long ride, that he had better see how many birds' nests he could count on the way. Charles began to count, thinking that he would not find more than ten or twelve; but he soon mounted up to twenty, fifty, and even a hundred. Bessie helped him to count; and they had a very merry time looking for the nests. Now they would find a snugly built nest in a comfortable crotch, and now one on a branch, with but a small twig to form a nook for it. Some ambitious birds had chosen lofty boughs, and others more humble sites for their dwellings. Charles was much delighted whenever he found an oriole's nest, hanging by slender filaments from some drooping bough; and he thought of the beautiful bird with

its bright red plumage flying to and fro, like some visitor from the tropics, warbling its clear, delicious notes.

Not a nest could be found in the woods through which they drove; the birds evidently liked to be near the homes of men; so that when they approached a farm-house, Charles looked confidently into the crooked old apple-trees, expecting to find a nest.

"Just look, mother," he exclaimed, "at those two nests in the apple-tree. What near neighbors the birds must have been in the pleasant summer-time. There is a stately oak-tree, so grand and tall, without a nest in it; and the lowly, spreading trees have one, two, and three." They saw a crow's nest high up in a grand old tree, with which its solid, substantial structure seemed quite in keeping. There was quite a contest who should find the two-hundredth bird's nest; and Charles and Bessie each saw one at the same time, so that the honor of that finding was left undetermined.

The road they traveled was very beautiful. It was bordered a great part of the way by fine old trees, passing by stately mansions, with noble avenues leading to them. One house looked like an Italian villa.

It was highly ornamented with a lofty turret, and a conservatory on the south side. Nearly opposite was a pretty, dark-brown stone church, with a parsonage nearly hidden in a grove of pines.

Many of these country places had groups of evergreens on the lawn, looking very pretty on the dazzling waste of snow. There were fanciful lodges, too, with latticed windows and encircling verandahs.

"How pretty this spot must be in summer," said Mrs. Evelyn, as they descended a hill, and crossed a bridge, beneath which in the summer a dancing rivulet must have found its way. It was breaking away in one spot from its icy fetters, and leaping down the rocks in a gushing stream, that made one think of summer sights and sounds. Mrs. Evelyn thought, as she looked at it stealing from beneath the solid ice above, of the under-current of feeling that sometimes flows under characters that seem unimpressible, whose icy surface would not betray to the eye the gushing tides of feeling below, until some crisis, some sudden emergence, like the rock over which those waters leaped, reveals the secret, and shows that the man is not all ice.

"Two hundred and twenty-seven bird's nests!" said Charles, as they entered the town. "Did you think, mother, we could have found so many?"

Their kind friend, Mrs. B., was very glad to see them, and they went out to make some purchases, promising to return to dinner. They did not know the streets, and Charles was much pleased with the idea of exploring and finding his way through a strange town. Mr. Herbert had sent for some books, and Aunt Ethel for a goodly store of nuts, fruits, and stationery. Having carefully examined the memorandum to see that they had thought of everything, they returned to Mrs. B.'s to dinner. Their kind hostess gave Charles some books, full of pretty engravings, to look at, and some large maps, with which he was much interested. Charles looked up at a portrait on the wall, and he could not but love the face, so tranquil, noble, and majestic, that was there pictured. His mother told him that it was that of a true soldier of the cross, who had fought a good fight for many years, and had now entered into his rest.

Thomas drove up to the door after dinner, and they were soon on their way home.

"What shall I do now, mother?" said Charles.

"You may count the birds' nests on one side of the road, and Bessie on the other."

There was no need of any other amusement; the anxiety to find the greatest number of birds' nests made the ride home a most animated one.

"O, look at that pretty squirrel!" exclaimed Charles, "with his bushy tail curled over his head and a nut in his paws. He sits so still that he looks like a carved image."

"Caw, caw, caw," cried some crows flying over their heads, and looking blacker than usual in contrast with the white snow.

"Mother, I saw some pretty snow-birds flying about the house on Saturday and picking up crumbs. I should think the little things must suffer in the cold, cold weather we have had."

"Do you remember, Charles, that pretty Norwegian custom of giving a Christmas dinner to the birds?"

"O yes, mother; I had almost forgotten that, but I recollect now. On Christmas morning every barn-door and gable-end and gateway is ornamented with a sheaf of corn, fastened to a long pole, and the birds come flocking to enjoy their Christmas feast. I wish

they would do so here, I should so like to see the birds come and peck at the corn, and fly round and round the uplifted sheaf, keeping a merry Christmas after their fashion."

"Even the poorest peasants," added his mother, "contrive to save some corn for the birds, which, as they have more than enough for their Christmas dinner, take it at their pleasure during the winter."

Charles did not forget to count the nests while he was talking with his mother; his eye searched faithfully through the branches of every tree on his side of the road. He did not look at the stately villas, or pretty lodges, or fine specimens of stone wall; nothing but birds' nests. There were more dwellings on his side of the road, which lay toward the river, while on the other the view was soon bounded by a range of low hills, and Charles consequently found more birds' nests, a circumstance which contributed greatly to his satisfaction.

"Nearly three hundred, mother, adding mine and Bessie's together; you know we did not begin to count them when we rode down till we had gone several miles. Now we have more than three hundred."

"And now," replied his mother, "you must count

no longer. It is too dark for you to see the nests, and you must not strain your eyes."

"My eyes are pretty tired already," said Charles; "but did you think we could find so many? I will write to Nellie about it to-morrow; she will be so astonished."

Charles now leaned his head back and closed his eyes.

"Look at that light," said Mrs. Evelyn, "how it sends its rays from the cottage on the hill. That is the way our Saviour says we must let our light shine, so that the traveler may see it, and its cheering beam may encourage the wayfaring man."

"There is the light from Wood Lawn," said Charles; "the parlor, I am sure, looks warm and bright for us." And so it did, with bright faces too.

"Late tea and tired people," said Aunt Ethel; "we must defer our conversation on the victory till to-morrow evening."

CHAPTER XVII.

UNEXPECTED GUESTS.

There are words of sacred greeting
Softly spoken o'er and o'er,
Blending with the heart's quick beating
Evermore.—MRS. GARDENER.

LOVELY winter day it was, and a charming sleigh-ride to the village. The south wind of the day before had thawed the snow, and a slight rain had fallen at night, so that the entire surface was glazed over. On the return home the sun, which had been partially vailed, shone out with all its brightness, and as it glistened on the icy surface it made the landscape a most dazzling one. The mountains and the hills on the other side of the river and the nearer hills and plains were radiant.

"It looks like a field of cloth of silver," said Mrs. Evelyn.

"This is an aspect of winter you have not seen before," said Mr. Herbert.

"I have seen every phase of beauty now," she replied.

"There is one more, I think, you have not seen: the new-fallen snow upon the trees."

"I saw that one day just after a snow-storm."

"Yes; but you did not see it when the sun was shining upon it, giving it the fine effect of light and shade, and relieving the somber hues of the dark branches with the white lines above. Artists generally choose that fairest, happiest attitude for their delineations."

"Just look at those far-off mountains, with their rim of silver," exclaimed Mrs. Evelyn, "and the glistening icy peaks near them; a pretty bit of Alpine scenery!"

"They are like blue stones set in silver, mother," said Charles. "What do you call that blue precious stone?"

"A turquoise," answered his mother; "and see the foldings of these hills, how beautiful they are. What do they look like?"

"Like silver velvet, if one could imagine such a thing," replied Mr. Herbert; "it is difficult to find any similitude for those soft, delicately-shaded tints of icy splendor. What must the other world be, when we see such glorious beauty in a ruined world?"

"We shall see no ice and snow there with their marvelous combinations of beauty."

"But we shall see something better, something more glorious."

"The 'sea of glass mingled with fire,'" added Mrs. Evelyn. "What we now look upon is a faint type of that. It looks pure and cold, and lacks the fiery glow."

"In thinking of death," said Mr. Herbert, "the painful idea to me is that of separation from friends; not so much the loss of their society, for I should expect to enjoy that through the ages to come, but I shrink from the thought that they may not be faithful to the end. As for the world and its beautiful things, I think I should not feel sadly at parting with them; for I know that my heavenly Father hath a better world and far more glorious scenes for the home of his ransomed ones."

"How it enriches the other world," rejoined Mrs.

Evelyn, "to know that we have friends there! What a home-like feeling it gives to its 'many mansions,' when we think that those dear to us as our own souls are now 'guests at the heavenly table.'"

"There is my father's sleigh!" exclaimed Mr. Herbert, as a sleigh drove up to the door.

"Your mother must have come."

"I am almost afraid to hear," said he, with a troubled look upon his brow.

"You need not fear," quickly replied Mrs. Evelyn, "for there is Aunt Ethel at the window, looking very cheerful and happy."

Aunt Ethel met Mr. Herbert as he sprung out of the parlor, and said, "Your father and mother have come, and await you in your room."

It was a joyous meeting. Happy faces gathered around the tea-table, and there was heartfelt thankfulness at the evening prayer for the protecting care which had once more brought them together again.

After tea the next evening, Mrs. Herbert told her son that she would go with him a while to his room, and Mr. Herbert began to examine Charles in his Latin. At once Aunt Ethel and Mrs. Evelyn put a snowy-white cloth on the table, and placed in the cen-

ter a fine Camellia, covered with beautiful pink blossoms. The flower-pot was concealed by a deep fringe of tissue paper, and there were pink, white, and blue mottoes in the soft green moss which covered the earth. Around this high, central ornament were placed oranges, pears, grapes, lady apples, Brazil nuts,

almonds, dates, figs, raisins, and prunes. In the branches of the Camellia were two cocoa-nut birds' nests, filled with sugared Madeira and hickory nuts.

Charles looked up inquiringly from his Latin at this unwonted display, but he saw his mother's finger pressed on her lips, and he tried to collect his thoughts and answer Mr. Herbert, though he got somewhat puzzled in the declensions. At length a tall, silver candlestick with three branches was put upon the table, and as it lighted up the pink flowers and the glossy green leaves of the Camellia, Charles jumped up and clapped his hands, exclaiming, "Why, that is almost as pretty as the Christmas-tree."

"Charles," said Aunt Ethel, "you may ring the bell for Mr. Herbert and his mother."

Charles rang the bell, and then capered round the room in an ecstasy of delight, which evidently needed some safety-valve. His mother sat down to the piano and played, while Charles jumped about, much to the amusement of Mr. Herbert, who, occupied with the boy's Latin, had not observed the preparations for the little feast with which Charles was so much charmed.

"Why does not Mr. Herbert come? Will he not be surprised at the feast?" And another series of evolutions was performed in joyous anticipation. "May I ring the bell again, Aunt Ethel?" he asked.

The permission was given, and the second ringing was more effectual than the first. Mr. Herbert looked surprised when he entered the room, which was all aglow with a brilliant coal fire, while the lights shone brightly through the branches of the Camellia. Mrs. Herbert, with a pleasant smile, walked over to the sofa, while her son stood quietly surveying the table.

"What does all this mean?" said he.

"It is," said Aunt Ethel, "a little feast that we had arranged for our concluding conversation on the armor, and we determined to have it in honor of our guests, though their coming has diverted our thoughts from the Victory, which was to have been our theme for the evening. We will now sit down to our fruit and nuts."

"Mr. Herbert," said Charles, "do you see those birds' nests made of cocoa-nut shells? I think they look prettier than anything. My attention has been drawn to birds' nests lately."

The evening passed away very agreeably, and Charles pronounced it almost as pleasant as Christmas.

"I am very sorry," said Aunt Ethel to her guests the next morning, "that you must go so soon. My

visit to you was a longer one, and it is such a happiness for your son to have you here."

"And for us to be here," replied Mrs. Herbert, "and to see him so much better; but our home duties will not allow us to remain longer away."

And so the parting soon followed the meeting; but the visit had been a happy one, and its joy remained in the heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VENERABLE VISITOR.

On rush'd the winter blast,
As o'er it whistled, shriek'd, and hiss'd;
Caught by its swooping wings,
The snow was whirl'd to eddying mist,
Barb'd as it seem'd with stings.—A. B. STREET.

FOR many days Aunt Ethel was ill. Suffering days and restless nights were her portion, and her friends were very anxious about her. At length, under God's blessing, she was once more restored to health; and most cheerful did the parlor look, when she could once more take her accustomed place at the tea-table. "Good news!" she exclaimed, as she hastily broke open a letter just brought in from the post. "My dear friends, Dr. and Mrs. Elton, are

coming to spend the Sabbath with us. This is an unexpected pleasure in this cold wintery time, with the thermometer ranging near zero; but Dr. Elton goes out in all weathers."

The next day brought these welcome guests; and the evening was spent most pleasantly in Christian converse. Doctor Elton, his venerable countenance lighted up with benignity and love, sat on the sofa, his hands resting on the head of his cane, while he spoke words of wisdom, the fruits of a rich and varied experience. Kindly calling Charles to him, he put his soft hand on the boy's head, and stroked his hair while he asked him questions about his lessons and sports. Then he told the lad about his own boyhood; and of the good mother who had watched over him, and prayed for him, and instructed him, until he was six years old, when he was left without father or mother, to struggle through the bleak world alone. After a while the venerable old gentleman walked up and down the room, leaning on the little boy's shoulder, and continuing his conversation with him.

"What a beautiful picture of youth and age," said Mrs. Elton, as the two paced up and down the room.

"How difficult to imagine that Dr. Elton was ever a child like Charles."

The wind blew wildly that night. All night long it blew terrible blasts—sweeping round the house, rattling the windows, and drifting the snow in great banks on the road. The morning sun shone out clear, but

> "The loud North again
> Buffeted the vex'd forests in his rage."

Dr. Elton had promised to preach in the Rosenberg Church; and though word came that the winds blew keenly, and the roads were closing up, he said he would go. He took his place in the large wood sleigh, which was thought safer to encounter snow-drifts. Mrs. Elton and Mrs. Evelyn, wrapped in furs, with hoods drawn over their hats, and Bessie, completed the party.

The wind blew fiercely, and, even at the gate, an appalling snow-drift beetled over the road; but they had not gone far before the horses began to plunge in the deep snow, and a snow-drift lifted the sleigh far up on one side. Thomas stood up, urged on the horses, and they were soon out of danger.

"I think we had better turn back," said Mrs. Evelyn; "it is too bad to go on."

"I am very much afraid of being upset," replied Mrs. Elton. "I once was overturned in a sleigh, and had my ankle sprained; and it has made me fearful ever since. I will get out, and walk back." As she went out, she said, "I think you had better not go on."

"I think so too," said Mrs. Evelyn.

"There is no place here to turn," said Thomas.

And so they rode on. The road was smoother as they went on, till it made a sudden turn, and passed along a hill-side through a wood. Here the snow was drifted above the stone walls, and heaped high up in the road; and as the horses went plunging through, there seemed some danger of sliding down hill in a new fashion. The worst part of the road was now passed; and with the exception of one snow-drift, into which Thomas drove with some apprehension, they had no more perilous places to pass through. But what a tempest swept over them as they approached the church! How the wind seemed to have been gathering up all its energies for a desperate attack, whirling the snow about, and almost blinding them.

The bell was ringing for the hour of service; and a faithful few, who always obeyed its invitation, were gathered together. It was very warm in church, and the sun shone brightly in at the windows.

"A placid stillness reigns,
Until the man of God, worthy the name,
Rises and reads the anointed Shepherd's lays.
His locks of snow, his brow serene, his look,
Of love, it speaks, 'Ye are my children all;'
Loud swells the song. O how that simple song,
Though rudely chanted, how it melts the heart,
Commingling soul with soul in one full tide
Of praise, of thankfulness, of humble trust!
Next comes the unpremeditated prayer,
Breathed from the inmost heart in accents low,
But earnest. Alter'd is the tone; to man
Are now address'd the sacred speaker's words.
Instruction, admonition, comfort, peace,
Flow from his tongue."

The service at an end, the minister of fourscore, who had come to preach to the people, had now to ride home with his face toward the wind that, in its fearful might, was careering over the hills and plains. About half a mile from the church the owner of a pretty little cottage by the road side stood at his gate,

and begged them to come in and stay all night. "It is too cold and stormy for the doctor to ride home," he said, "and for you too, Mrs. Evelyn. You had better come in, and we will do all we can to make you comfortable."

Mrs. Evelyn well knew that, for she had taken tea there, and she was always struck with the neatness of the house and the warm-hearted hospitality of its occupants. She thanked the good man for his kindness, but said that their friends would be anxious about them, and they must go on in the face of the storm.

"Can you take this little girl as far as Mr. Martin's?" said a woman who was awaiting them by the side of the road.

"Very willingly," said Mrs. Evelyn, as she recognized one of her Sunday-school scholars; "jump in here and sit beside me." As they drove through the deep snow-drifts Mrs. Evelyn wondered how the child could have made her way up the steep hill-sides to the church. She was not very warmly wrapped up, but her patient little face betrayed no sign of suffering, though the rude blast that chilled her was one which strong men would shrink from encountering. They left her at her home on the river-bank, and as they

wound around the hill they were sheltered for some time from the violence of the wind. "But those terrible snow-drifts," thought Mrs. Evelyn; "they must be much deeper now; how shall we ever get through them?" The careful coachman and the good horses brought them safely through, however, with only a few moments of painful uncertainty. But was there ever such a keen, biting blast, strong in its might, untiring in its sweep?

"There is a tremendous snow-drift near the gate," said Thomas. Happily, it was piled up on one side of the road, so that they passed it in safety, and reached home thankful for a shelter from the tempest.

"A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." These words came to Mrs. Evelyn's mind with new meaning as she thought of the Saviour sheltering the poor storm-driven children of earth from the tempest that threatens to overwhelm them.

Mrs. Elton came to help her husband out of the sleigh, and was greatly relieved to see him at home again. Charles kissed his mother affectionately, and told her how anxious he had been when the storm increased so much in fury. Mr. Herbert came down to

the parlor to hear how they had fared. Mrs. Evelyn stood blowing her fingers, which ached with the intense cold. "I now know," said she, laughing, "something of what you have been trying to make me understand about snow-drifts."

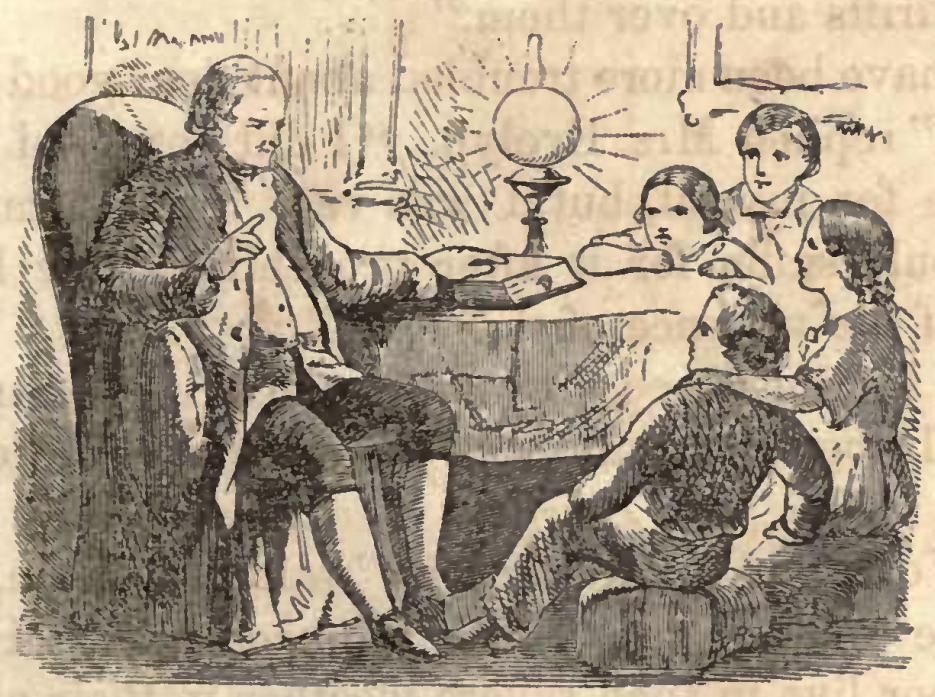
"You were so incredulous," said Mr. Herbert, "and you viewed all our pictures of the perils of snow-drifts as so highly colored, that I cannot be very sorry that you have learned something from experience. You will not now think it quite so easy to ride through snow-drifts and over them."

"I have been more troubled about dear good Doctor Elton," replied Mrs. Evelyn. "I did not mind the exposure for myself, but I was very much afraid that he would suffer for it after preaching. We had no idea of the violence of the wind."

"It has increased very much within an hour," said Mr. Herbert; "there was no such gale when you left."

"We ought to be thankful," said Dr. Elton, "that we are now sheltered from the keen blast. How do the poor live in such severe weather in their comfortless houses, and with their insufficient clothing? God help the poor."

The Sunday evening twilight was very pleasant. Mrs. Elton had a sweet voice, and while Mrs. Evelyn accompanied them on the piano, she, with Mr. Herbert and Charles, sang hymns that led their thoughts away from the stormy winds of earth to the calm rest of heaven.



THE BANNER OF VICTORY.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VICTORY.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.—1 Tim. vi, 12.

THE next evening Aunt Ethel said, "I am so glad that you are with us, dear Dr. Elton, and especially that you are here this evening."

"And why especially this evening?" replied the doctor.

"Because we have had a series of conversations on the Christian's armor and warfare. The concluding conversation, on the victory, has been deferred in consequence of my illness; and I shall not be sorry if we shall thereby gain for its consideration the light of your wisdom and experience."

"The guide to our thoughts," replied Dr. Elton,

THE VICTOR'S TRIUMPH.

"may be found in the words of Scripture, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' This language is obviously figurative, used in allusion to the ancient games and contests; when at the end of the race, or in the presence of the combatants, stood the witnesses and judge of their exer-

tions, who declared the issue of the contest, and placed the triumphant garland on the victor's brow. This world is the theater; Christians struggling against flesh and blood, principalities and powers, the combatants; death the termination of the contest; and the Lord Jesus Christ himself the Judge, who pronounces the award, and crowns the victor with a crown of life."

The subject was in unison with Doctor Elton's thoughts. He paused for a few moments; and then, with his eyes closed, his clasped hands resting, as they were wont, upon the head of his cane, he proceeded, as if thinking aloud:

"Thrones and crowns, empty and unsatisfying as they often prove in the possession, are in the prospect among the brightest and most alluring objects of pursuit on earth, and they are therefore among the most appropriate symbols of reward in heaven; but, after all, they are symbols only.

"Even St. Paul, with all his graces and attainments, when raised to the third heaven, was so overwhelmed with its magnificence and glory, that he declares he knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. St. John, too, when describing the new Jeru-

THE SAINT'S TRIUMPH.

salem, makes use of the most sublime and picturesque imagery. The city of which he speaks, is a city whose foundations are precious stones, whose streets are pure gold, whose trees are trees of life, whose rivers are rivers of salvation, whose keepers are angels, whose light is the visible glory of God and the Lamb; and whose inhabitants, clothed in white robes, carry palms of victory, and wear crowns of life.

"It is impossible not to believe that these symbols indicate the existence of a visible magnificence and glory, suited by its intensity to the outward adornment of some grand central city, the select and chosen residence of the Ruler of the universe; and there may be the visible crowning of the victor when he enters heaven."

"And often," said Aunt Ethel, "are glimpses of this crown and this glory given to the dying soldier of the cross. 'I have served God more than fifty years,' said Bishop Hedding in his last moments on earth. 'I have generally had peace; but *I never saw such glory before*—such light, such clearness, such beauty! O, I want to tell it to the world! O, had I a trumpet voice,

"'"Then would I tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found."

But I cannot. I never shall be able to preach again; never shall go over the mountains and through the valleys, the woods and the swamps, to tell of Jesus any more. But O, what glory I feel! it shines and burns all through me; it came upon me like the rushing of a mighty wind, as on the day of Pentecost.' When it was remarked to him that he was almost over Jordan, he looked up and answered, 'Yes.' Then raising both hands, he shouted, scarcely above a whisper: 'Glory! glory! Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory!' When asked if death had any terrors, he replied: 'No, none whatever. My peace is made with God. I am happy, filled. My God is my best friend; and I trust in him with all my heart. I have trusted in him for more than fifty years. "Because I live, ye shall live also." What a promise!' And with that promise on his lips he passed into the presence of Him who liveth and was dead, and is now alive for evermore."

"To be crowned," said Dr. Elton, "as one of the victors. 'The crown of righteousness,' saith St. Paul, 'which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' By these words, St.

Paul not only reasserts the doctrine that the rewards of grace are infallibly certain, but also proclaims the universality and the perpetuity of its application.

"If faithful, we may be sure of the crown, the reward is certain, and it is also abundant. 'I will be thy exceeding great reward.' God the reward of fidelity! what an idea is this! How dwindles into insignificance every other reward! For what the robes of office? what the trappings of power? what crowns and kingdoms? Nay, what even suns and systems, in comparison with Him, whose power sustains and wields, and whose glory lights them?

"Little as I know of God, and less as I have served him, I would not give away my faint and wavering hope of him, for all the certitude that even he could give of whatever else his universe contains. I have seen yon midnight firmament studded with stars; I have seen yon noonday sun extinguishing those stars by its intenser brightness; and my delighted eye has traveled over those more distant fields of glory, which the telescope reveals. I have taken the nearer and the richer views of Paradise which John's prophetic vision gives me. I have dwelt, and I love to dwell, on that city whose keepers are angels, whose trees

HEAVENLY VISIONS.

are trees of life, whose rivers are rivers of salvation, whose gates are gold, and in whose foundation, even, many a precious stone glitters. But, after all, it is not this outward gilding, this superficial luster, this banquet of the senses, but the Divinity within, the

God whose glory lights this inner sanctuary, I aspire to. 'Tis God himself. God is the Christian's heaven; and where he is not, every place is hell."

Dr. Elton paused; all seemed unwilling to interrupt the meditations of "the old man eloquent;" all had listened with rapt attention to the thoughts he threw out on the victor's crown.

"It is very comforting to our faith," said Mrs. Evelyn, "to hear those who soon must lay their armor down, speak with such calm trust of the future opening before them, their warfare almost at an end, and the wreath of victory full in view. With what holy confidence Dr. Erskine Mason, cut off as he was in the midst of his days, received the summons. In his last hours, moved even to tears, he said: 'I have had the most glorious and elevating views, such as I never expected to enjoy in this world. It was in the watches of the night, and I feared to sleep lest I should lose them.' . . . 'I am not now to begin,' he subsequently said, 'and make my preparations. All is safe, all safe.' 'Have you doubts and fears?' whispered a friend in his last hour. 'Doubts! No. Faith is everything. It is all bright and clear. Have faith.' And gently he passed away."

"It is said," observed Mr. Herbert, "that the heathen executioners of Rasalama, one of the martyrs of Madagascar, who continued to pray and exhort all around her to believe in Jesus until the spear thrust through her body deprived her of the power of speech, were heard repeatedly to say, 'There is some charm in the religion of the white people which takes away the fear of death.' How completely it was taken away from Ra-poa-negro, the first baptized convert who died in Madagascar, after an illness of only three days, during which he said many times, 'I am going to Jehovah-Jesus; Jesus is fetching me; I do not fear.'"

"He had no cause for fear," said Dr. Elton; "for the crown of life awaits the faithful disciple of Jesus. Life is often used in the sacred writings to denote holiness, which is truly the life of the soul. Its perfection in holiness, the restoration of God's lost image, is, therefore, fitly symbolized by a crown of life. Holiness is the crown of angels, and why should it not be the crown of men?"

"How fleeting are the rewards of earthly glory," said Mrs. Evelyn; "how soon the plaudits of the multitude die away; how quickly fades the wreath upon the victor's brow."

"All earthly recompenses," rejoined Dr. Elton, "are, from their very nature, fleeting and perishable. As such, they not only will perish, but do perish continually, and vanish before our eyes. Of how many fortunes raised on this foundation do we see to-day but the melancholy ruins? How often, since we have become the spectators of the scenes of life, might we not use the language of the prophet: 'I have seen the wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green bay-tree. Yet he passed away, and lo! he was not; I sought him, but he could not be found.' Where is Napoleon? Louis Philippe? or which of those distinguished favorites of fortune whose exalted stations now seem to put them beyond the reach of danger, can say he is sure even of to-morrow? Much less can he say 'his mountain stands strong, and that he shall never be moved.' Who dares affirm that he who is at the zenith of his glory is not even now ready to fall, and to show by his fall that the world hath nothing lasting, much less eternal, for its followers?"

"I have been reminded, in the course of this conversation," said Mrs. Elton, "of the series of pictures of the cross and the world, which was Cole's last great work, left unfinished at his death. Bryant says: 'The design

is one of singular grandeur, and capable, in his hands, of a noble execution.' His description of the third picture particularly impressed me. 'The pilgrim arrived at the end of his journey on the summit of the mountain, that ineffable glory in the heavens, before which he kneels; the luminous path over the enkindled clouds leading upward to it; the mountain height, shooting with verdure under the beams of that celestial day, the darkness sullenly recoiling on either side; the ethereal messengers sent to conduct the wayfarer to his rest, form altogether a picture' upon which we may concentrate the thoughts that have been presented to us this evening."

"The last unfinished picture," said Mrs. Evelyn, "was to represent the crowning of the pilgrim. What a scene rises before us when we think of the Christian soldier, his battles all fought, his armor laid aside forever, his brow radiant with the blessed consciousness that he was faithful unto death, receiving from the beloved Captain of his salvation the crown of life; no empty badge of honor, no mere symbol; but a gift of inexpressible value."

"Yes," said Dr. Elton, with his eyes closed and an expression of holy triumph on his benignant counte

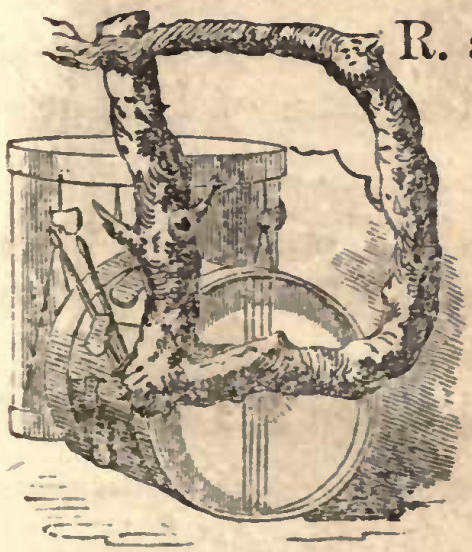
nance; "life here is not our crown, but a flower that blossoms on our bosom and then fades; but a crown is prepared for the faithful soldier of Christ, a crown which is to be everlasting. They will reign, but their reign, like that of God, will be without end. They will be filled with joy unspeakable and enduring as God, the author of it. For they will share his glory, a glory that will never diminish or fade, but which will always be bright and brightening forever."

SPRING.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RETURN OF SPRING.

The noisy streams
Are just set free, and milder suns melt off
The plashy snow, save only the firm drift
In the deep glen or the close strade of pines.
Along the quiet air
Come and float calmly off the soft, light clouds,
Such as you see in summer, and the winds
Scarce stir the branches.—BRYANT.



R. and Mrs. Elton took their departure the next day, leaving the dwellers at Wood Lawn with delightful memories of their visit.

The weather became milder. The snow that had lain so long unbroken on the lawn was gradually wasting away. The fine sleighing gave place to muddy roads. At length the snow only lingered in patches here and there in the woods or in the hollows of the hills. The river

was still closely locked by the ice; but there were dark streaks here and there that betrayed the influence of the sun's fervid rays. The pleasant sound of streams rushing on, and breaking away from the long silence of winter, filled the air. Their course could be traced as they made their way into the ice of the river. Two great cracks were one morning discovered stretching across the river. It was a bland, beautiful morning; fleecy clouds floated in the calm blue of the heavens, and as, tempted forth by the warm sunshine, Charles and his friends once more walked on the uncovered earth, one repeated the beautiful words of Scripture: "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come."

The birds were hopping about on the gravel walk, and giving, in a few sweet notes, intimations of the coming music of the springtime.

"This day reminds one of Whittier's Dream of Summer," said Mr. Herbert:

> "'Bland as the morning breath of June
> The southwest breezes play;
> And through its haze the winter noon
> Seems warm as summer's day.

"'The snow-plumed angel of the North
Has dropp'd its icy spear;
Again the mossy earth looks forth,
Again the streams gush clear.'"

"We must ride over to Brook-side this morning," said Aunt Ethel; and much they enjoyed their visit there. The winter snows melted away in the valley, the stream unbound rushing on in its might, the woods carpeted with wild flowers, which Charles gathered with great delight; the moss emerging, green and beautiful, from its snowy covering; everything was pleasant. One little tributary rill, which had been diverted from its natural channel by an accumulation of leaves, overflowed the path. Charles enjoyed plunging his hands in the cold water and drawing out the matted leaves, and seeing the little stream return to its rocky bed, down which it leaped with new glee as he dammed up the channel which led it into the footpath.

Their ride home lay along a hill-side which commanded a fine view of the river, and Charles clapped his hands and shouted as a broad tract of blue water lay before them, "The river is open, the river is open! just while we have been gone see how the ice has floated away."

Mr. Herbert was on the lawn as they drove up to the door, and as they jumped out hastily to have a nearer view of the unbound waters, they saw a steamboat, gaily dressed in flags, making its way through the ice. Mr. Herbert and Charles soon extemporized flags, which they waved as the steamboat passed. It was pleasant to watch her now, laboriously breaking through the ice, and then quietly sailing upon the blue water. The whole household were out on the lawn; the breaking up of the river was a high festival, and it seemed an interruption to go in to dinner. Charles spent the afternoon on the lawn, watching the varying shapes of ice and water, and naming the continents, islands, gulfs, bays, and capes he traced thereon after his friends, mingling their names in curious combinations.

The next day was lovely, genial sunshine, gentle airs. The large masses of ice of the day before were broken up in smaller pieces that were floating down with the current. The amber hues of the sky were reflected in the placid waters that gently bore onward icy peaks and islands. There were no great tracts of blue water as on the day before, but the river was all dotted over with the icy fragments, which assumed, in

the eyes of the spectators from the piazza, various forms as they followed their course.

"I had no idea," said Mrs. Evelyn, "that the river would break up so quietly. I thought that the masses of ice would dash against one another with more noise and commotion."

"How quietly all the great works of nature are performed," replied Aunt Ethel. "He spreadeth the heaven with clouds, rapidly and without noise; and those wide-spread, heaped-up masses of snow, how insensibly they have disappeared. What would require the labor of millions of men, is done when 'He quieteth the earth by the south wind,' and 'maketh his sun to shine.'"

"I think," said Mr. Herbert, "we shall never forget this soft, beautiful afternoon, and the ever-varying scene, so peculiar and striking, that has so long riveted our gaze. One could almost imagine those floating fragments to be fleecy clouds sailing in the calm of the skies, whose golden hues are reflected in the still waters."

"The thought that this beauty is only for the day," said Mrs. Evelyn, "destined to give place to a new phase on the morrow, gives it a melancholy charm. It is

fascinating to gaze upon what is so visibly passing away from us, to return no more—never more. And thus have floated away our winter joys and hours, to return no more. And this is my last afternoon here; to-morrow Charles and I go to town."

"The winter has been very pleasant," said Aunt Ethel, "though to Mr. Herbert and me it has brought sickness and suffering. It has brought profit as well as happiness with it, blended experiences of joy and sorrow; and the commingling light and shade make the picture of the past beautiful. I am sure it has enriched us all with new thoughts, and blessed associations connected with the armor of light, which has given interest to so many hours, that it will be closely linked with all our remembrances of the deep winter-time."

THE END.

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